

DEVELOPMENT OF A CHAPLAINCY HANDBOOK
FOR THE MULTICULTURAL, SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISPARATE, AND
TRANSIENT RACETRACK COMMUNITY

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Alcoholics Anonymous
CPE	Clinical Pastoral Education
CSAM	Chaplain School and Annual Meeting
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
RTCA	Race Track Chaplaincy of America

ABSTRACT

Chaplains are vital to fulfilling the Great Commission in closed settings.

Racetracks are high-security closed settings that are also international crossroads. For these reasons racetracks are prime strategic locations for mission work.

The people who are willing to be chaplains at racetracks need some basic guidance to assist them in acclimating to this unique political and social environment. The applicants for the chaplain positions, and currently serving chaplains, are often not trained as Christian leaders and do not have the necessary organizational experience to set up and administer a chaplaincy.

This thesis-project and its handbook examine this challenge and provide a means of addressing it.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Horse racing has been a part of civilization at least since the first ancient Olympiad in 776 BC,¹ and it has quite steadily increased in number of races, quantity of amounts betted, and the size of gross purses.² Globalization and the ease with which horses can be transported all around the world have more than maintained the growth of interest in horse racing. Races are broadcast via satellite all over the world, even into a person's cell phone, and the ability to bet on these races has increased along with this increased technology. In fact in many states the gambling industry is allowed to exist only because of horse racing and continue to exist in cooperation with horse racing enterprises.

It seems gambling and horse racing have always been closely associated. Horse racing, while known as the sport of kings, has long been known as “the sport of bad behaviour and downright cheating.”³ As early as 1740 the British Parliament introduced an act to “restrain and to prevent the excessive increase in horse racing.”⁴ In America the first jockey club had already been formed in 1732 in South Carolina “to bring law, order, and governance to the sport.”⁵ Over time the ability to cheat has been greatly reduced with drug testing, starting gates, high-speed photography, and state regulation. Vigilance

¹ John Carter, *The History of Horse Racing: First Past the Post* (London, England: Anness Publishing Limited, 2017), 8.

² The Jockey Club, 2017 Fact Book, accessed December 12, 2018, <http://jockeyclub.com/Default.asp?section=Resources&area=11>.

³ Carter, *History of Horse Racing*, 18.

⁴ Carter, *History of Horse Racing*, 19.

⁵ Bill Mooney and George Ennor, *The Complete Encyclopedia of Horse Racing*, 6th ed. (London, England: Carlton Books Limited, 2016), 11.

is an ongoing necessity to keep up with efforts to try and get around the rules and regulations.

It is into this Samaria of sorts that the racetrack chaplain enters perhaps without any knowledge of the polity and practices of horse racing. A chaplain with the Race Track Chaplains of America also “seeks to bring the word of God and the teachings of Jesus Christ to the people affiliated with horse racing; so that they may respond to God’s grace by accepting Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.”⁶

At any given horse racetrack there are thousands of people from all over the world due to the global interest in horse racing. It is an international nexus of nations. Many of these people are from nations where the church cannot send missionaries. It is a most strategic location in which to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with people with whom the church could not otherwise directly communicate.

There are people from every socioeconomic level. Some would be homeless if not for the dormitory-like housing provided. Still others fly into town on their own private jets. A myriad of professions, trades, and laborers are also represented at any horse racetrack.

Some people will be there for only a day. Others will live there for decades, never leaving, and coming to fear being outside of the track property. Others will work there all their lives but return to luxurious homes each night.

The Hidden World of the Racetrack

The racetrack is a setting that is largely closed to the public. One cannot be admitted to non-public parts, which is 90 percent of the property, without a license from

⁶ Purpose Statement from the Constitution and By-Laws of Race Track Chaplains of America.

the racing commission of the state where the track is located. Even on days when there is racing and the general public is admitted for viewing of the races, the vast majority of the property remains off limits to the public. So, the most succinct definition of a chaplaincy is ministry in a closed setting. The most succinct distinction between a parish and a chaplaincy is that, while much of the same type of ministry as the parish is taking place in and through the chaplaincy, it is taking place in this closed setting.⁷

The level of closedness will vary from one type of chaplaincy setting to another. A prison is more closed and inaccessible than a hospital, for instance. It is the chaplain who has access, in any setting, to virtually all areas of the institution. When I was a part-time hospital chaplain I spent time in operating rooms and board rooms and could walk in the back door of the emergency room. With tact, friendliness, diplomacy, pluck, and luck, the chaplain is the most visible person of an institution. In my case, while having been an ordained minister for twenty years prior to becoming the chaplain at a racetrack, my denomination has additionally designated me as a special interest missionary, in recognition that the racetrack is a special mission field.

Horse racing is a diverse and labor-intensive enterprise, and so there are thousands of employees. Many poor, unskilled laborers looking for work are drawn to the racetrack. Caring for any horse is a lot of work. Caring for a race horse requires much more attention than an average horse. Immigrants and citizens alike who are unskilled can find work and even housing at the racetrack. Due to the free housing that is available for racetrack workers, even those who would otherwise be homeless are drawn to the racetrack—the poorest of the poor.

⁷ E. Dean Cook, *Chaplaincy: Being God's Presence in Closed Communities* (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2010), 2.

There are also many professional disciplines and tradesmen caring for the horses. Additionally there are the other professions who would be caring for any property (e.g., carpenters, electricians, plumbers, housekeepers). The care for the horses continues seven days a week. Even the skilled and upwardly mobile workers are isolated from the larger community due to the demands of racetrack work. At my racetrack there are more than two thousand full-time employees.

It is important for the chaplain to know the responsibilities of the many different workers at the racetrack and how they interact with other workers and offices. Certain individuals may hold positions in more than one area, but there are basically three specific delineations on the track. They are management, racing commission (state government), and horsemen. It is helpful to think of it as federal, state, and local officials all working together to get the job done. Another category often forgotten is those who are considered vendors and only vendors (e.g., veterinarians, farriers, trainers, pony riders, tack companies, feed businesses, and chaplains).

Management is in charge of the physical property. This includes maintenance (e.g., plumbers, carpenters, electricians, grounds keepers), security, risk management, executives, food service, pari-mutuels, cleaning, gate crew, outriders, clerical workers, and others to be sure. Many of these people can collect unemployment when the track is closed if they are not needed.

The racing commission is part of the state government. Their workers are state employees. They probably have better benefits, sick days, and vacation than do other workers. They can collect unemployment when the track is closed. These are the people

who issue licenses. There are clerks and executives here. The state also employs some veterinarians for testing and oversight.

The stewards are also state employees. Stewards at a horse racetrack are part ombudsman and part judge. They judge the races and disputes that arise at any time. When someone comes to you to complain that he or she was not paid, you send them to the stewards—that is one of the stewards' jobs. The stewards have a lot of power to withhold purses, for instance. They will impose penalties for non-payment of wages as well, and not many people seem to know this. It is best not to get directly involved. The stewards are those who can really help, and they often make enemies. They receive hate mail on a regular basis. The chaplain can remember even Jesus' response in Luke 12:13-14.

The jockeys are a separate category. They have a specific set of rules. The jockeys are very much like a historic guild. They use the same categorical terms as guilds. They start out as apprentices, and there are three stages to their time as an apprentice. Eventually they will be called journeymen jockeys. There are separate licenses issued to the jockeys along these stages by the state racing commission.

The horsemen's association is made up of almost everyone else: owners of horses, trainers, grooms, hot walkers. Many people who have a job in the barns in the early mornings or own a horse or two are also involved with the commission or management or have a family member who is employed in these areas. The horsemen will have an office with some clerks, managers, a director, and a board of directors. Listening, looking, and walking around will help the chaplain sort out the offices and the people who work in one or more of them.

There is no place with a more diverse population of nationalities and professions in a square mile of property than a horse racetrack. It is certainly a strategic place for a Christian presence and ministry to be stationed. Without a chaplaincy licensed to be present on the property of the racetrack, the work of the church would largely be nonexistent. The problem is for every track to have a chaplain and for all track chaplains to have the special skills and education necessary to minister effectively in this extremely diverse setting.

Problems Facing Racetrack Chaplains

In order for the church to have a presence and witness to the people who work and/or inhabit the racetrack there must be a chaplaincy. Local churches are not allowed on the property for visitation or other programs without the special and limited invitation from an accepted chaplaincy. A chaplaincy ministry is necessary to carry on the ministry of the church to this population.

I have traveled to thirteen racetracks across the United States and had extensive conversations and interactions with another twenty-eight chaplains in preparing to write a handbook for racetrack chaplains, and even earlier as I actively sought fellowship and self-improvement. After looking at these forty-one racetracks, drawing on my seven and a half years of full-time racetrack chaplaincy, and reading everything I could find that had anything to do with racetracks, I have concluded that in order for a chaplaincy to be established, maintained, and grow in the sense of value that it is viewed by the racetrack population, the chaplain has to show that needs are being met. The chaplain additionally needs to show that he is increasingly effective in his abilities to meet these needs (this is

to include hiring, training, and equipping volunteer and paid staff members). Additionally, education and professional development is essential for this to happen, especially among the racetrack chaplain cadre because of the very low level of education of the average racetrack chaplain. It is also important for each chaplaincy to have a local council. I hope to revisit this part of the chaplaincy, but I think of it as the board of trustees and diaconate or elders of a church.

A chaplaincy council can give the chaplain objectivity about his or her work. How is the chaplain perceived by the racetrack community? Are the needs and expectations being met? A local council made up of a cross section of the community can give clear answers to these questions and assist in meeting them.

I was fortunate to follow a chaplain who was well respected. I was additionally blessed to spend a few days with him before he retired and before I began my ministry there. When the retiring chaplain introduced me to the executive director of the horsemen's association (a man who also has an accomplished history as a lawyer), the executive director whispered in my ear, "I am going to expect you to take care of a lot of problems for me." The chaplaincy I was called to already was addressing a number of problems for the racetrack community. I did not have to begin without having any idea what were the needs that the chaplain was expected to meet. There were already some informal understanding of this and consequently a sense of value that allowed for some remuneration to be gratefully given.

The chaplain does have to somehow be paid, and supported. The chaplain demonstrably meeting real needs that management and the horsemen have is the number one lever when asking for and receiving remuneration. When the chaplain demonstrably

and effectively employs new skills and training, this allows for increases in support to be rewarded reasonably and ministry to be expanded.

Churches can also be a source for support. The churches are especially helpful in supporting special events. Functions that management is apt to consider non-essential are those that the churches take the greatest joy and interest in supporting. The weekly chapel n' chows (worship and a meal) are almost entirely supported by and prepared by churches. Holiday parties are almost completely paid for by church donations of money, time, and in-kind gifts.

One of the things I had to learn as a racetrack chaplain was fundraising. It was completely different than in the church, and it was much more my responsibility. In the church the leaders had a large part to play in raising funds for the ministry. At the racetrack the chaplain may have to do it almost solely on his or her own. I had never written a grant before, but learning and doing it step by step has been time well rewarded.

The biggest problems among backstretch workers are substance abuse and gambling.⁸ Many workers are given free housing and so, aside from having to feed and clothe themselves, they have minimal expenses. The food and clothing are often forgotten in the race to gamble and abuse substances. There is a vicious cycle with the co-addictions of gambling and substance abuse. The despair that comes from gambling losses often more fiercely propels the substance abuse.

The chaplaincy's first duty is to feed and clothe those who are lacking these things. Sometimes these needs can be caused by not being paid, and a host of other needs. The co-first duty is to set up a program that addresses the abuses of substances and

⁸ Curtis F. Barrett and Don C. Clippinger, *Winners! The Story of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs in the Horse Racing Industry* (Hightstown, NJ: Daily Racing Form Press, 1997), 22.

gambling. Education and training in these needs must be simultaneous for the chaplain and for those chaplains who have virtually no theological training.

There is always room for improvement. My chaplaincy had an Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) program, but there were other problems in addition to alcohol. I instantly improved this with simply changing the name to “12-step program.” This embraced a host of other addictions and abuses.

Additionally, I discovered, the program, at least informally, lasted twelve weeks. Most people started when they were forced to go to the chaplain because their problems had become especially noticeable and debilitating. If they did not go to “the chaplain’s program” they would be ruled off the track and probably have nowhere to go. They would come to group and/or individual meeting for twelve weeks and then (and this is how I discovered) ask me to write the letter. This would often be preceded with a smiling person expecting congratulations and dismissal. My incredulous “What do you mean?” led to the above explanation.

I wrote a few of these letters early in my tenure. They always simply stated the fact of people’s attendance and the duration. I could not in good faith give my permission for them to stop attending meetings. I would ask people what their plans were, why they wanted to stop coming to meetings, and so on. I would tell them how as a pastor I never baptized someone and said, “I’ll see you at the wedding.” I never married a couple and said, “I’ll see you at the funeral.” It is essential to continue to follow after the new plan for their life and the twelfth step says to share their newfound light with others. Continuing to go to meetings is a way of doing that.

I of course discovered much of this through studying the 12-step program after being given the responsibility of leading 12-step meetings. I was able to say the steps with the others by inserting “sin” when saying that which I was powerless over in the first step. In studying the 12 steps I knew that there was no inkling of teaching that discharged followers after twelve weeks to go on their way. This new learning was put in to practice in conducting the program, and we now have much richer meetings. Additionally, there are some workers who I have come to know who have been going to meetings for more than twenty years who can lead meetings when I am away.

There are some who were powerfully and seemingly instantly transformed from a life of abuses after having a salvation experience with Jesus the Christ. This is something that I and many other chaplains have had the privilege of playing a part in, but we must not limit the break with substance abuse solely to this modality, as is the practice of some of our chaplains. Having a proper and growing education is almost certain to bring one beyond this limited view of deliverance from abusive and addictive behaviors.

The Discovered Needs of Chaplains

I had a master of divinity, a master’s in education, Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) training, and twenty-two years of full-time pastoral experience, but upon coming to the racetrack there was still much more for me to learn. One who has spent a lifetime on the racetrack but has then been called to be a chaplain, perhaps on the same track, also has much to learn. Having a basic handbook for racetrack chaplains will save them from having to learn things through personal discovery.

I always thought that chaplains had a little more training than even a seminary trained pastor. What I learned was that most racetrack chaplains had not been to seminary. Many had little college training, and little interest in education.

The big problem that this thesis addresses is that I have discovered among racetrack chaplains an utter unwillingness to study and show themselves approved. I discovered this repeatedly, to my dismay, when asking another chaplain in a friendly and conversational way, “Where did you go to seminary, brother?” It was almost always met with a scornful comment to the effect of how wasteful an endeavor that would be. I finally stopped asking such questions but have not stopped being dismayed at the strong scorn of scholarship that is readily and repeatedly expressed by too many racetrack chaplains.

I think that I have generously changed my opinion of the necessity of a seminary education in order to be an active chaplain; however, I as much as ever expect and see the necessity of having an active educational and devotional life in order to be a proficient practicing chaplain. In the extremely diverse environment of the racetrack it is virtually impossible to be widely educated enough to speak to all the people, but the chaplain must be able to communicate clearly the wisdom of the Bible.

In the next chapter a case will be made to counter this low esteem toward study and learning held by racetrack chaplains. Given the reasonable regard for the Bible that the chaplains have, a foundation for our argument to stir the chaplains to study will be the Scriptural call to study that is especially given to the clergy.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CALL TO STUDY AND PREPARATION

Introduction

In the last section we stated the problem currently facing racetrack chaplains is their great lack of scholarly preparation and their ongoing neglect of learning. There is this debilitating notion that being called is the beginning and end of their preparation. The late Donald Barnhouse is reported to have said, “If I had only three years to serve the Lord, I would spend two of them studying and preparing.”¹ There are others who by their actions show that they do not believe this for themselves and still others who discourage those who would endeavor to hold study to such an important place in their schedules. I want to encourage especially those who have been called as pastors and chaplains to come to believe that study is important and that there is little that one could better do with his or her time.

Part of the reason that many keep study so far from the front of their priorities is a partial misunderstanding of its importance. There is a disparagement of study, even to the point of misquoting of the greats, that has gone on for so long that the true meaning has all but been lost. Who has not heard Pope’s line, “A little Learning is a dang’rous Thing,” taken by itself as a statement against learning of all kinds? I am not sure that I have ever heard anyone use the line in context for what, I believe, Pope wished it to impart:

A little Learning is a dang’rous Thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian Spring:
There shallow Draughts intoxicate the Brain,

¹ John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 181.

And drinking largely sobers us again.²

Clearly Pope's warning has to do with too little learning and is directing us that more and deep learning is the cure for too little learning. If people would read not just a few lines but a few pages, they would have found encouragements and warnings such as this:

Learning and Rome alike in Empire grew,
And Arts still follow'd where her Eagles flew;
From the same Foes, at last, both felt their Doom,
And the same Age saw Learning fall, and Rome.³

The truth of these lines raises the level of importance of learning to that which causes the rise and fall of empires. Churches, seminaries, parachurch organizations, pastors, and chaplains must surely, together, consider this when they determine the amount of time that is acceptable to study. I say together because as hard as it is, in and of itself, for the individual to study, organizations that by not encouraging and requiring study may de facto discourage it and set up a scenario in which it is not just "weariness of the flesh"⁴ but a virtual impossibility.

There will always be the tension from somewhere, within and without, pulling one away from quality, edifying study. But "study, therefore, to withdraw the love of your soul from all things that are visible, and to turn to things that are invisible. Those who follow their own sensuality hurt their own cause."⁵

² Alexander Pope, *Pope: Selected Poems; The Essay on Criticism; The Moral Essays*, 7th ed., trans. Thomas Arnold (1711; London, England: Longman, Green, 1896), lines 215-18.

³ Pope, *Pope: Selected Poems*, 22, lines 683-86.

⁴ Eccl 12:12, King James Version.

⁵ Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, trans. Richard Whitford and Harold C. Gardiner (1427; Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1955), 32.

Scriptural Examples of the Priority for Study

Let me at the outset state that with limited time, even if it all were spent studying, there must be a prioritizing. Let Scripture be a constant and major part of one's study. "Men pass lightly away, but the truth of God endures forever."⁶ The apostles are recorded early as saying, "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."⁷

The word *devote* in this verse, in older English versions, is translated "give ourselves continually." The Greek here is προσκαρτερήσομεν (προσκαρτερέω); it is a combination of the preposition πρὸς which is found in a multitude of texts and translated in several ways but means a direction (i.e., to, towards) and proximity (i.e., near). The other part of this word, καρτέρηω, is only found once, in Hebrews 11:27 (ἐκαρτέρησεν), and is typically translated "persevered" or "endured." The word found in Acts 6:4 is not uncommon; it is used ten times in the New Testament, first in Mark 3:9, where Jesus is speaking of having a boat waiting or ready. The word carries the strong sense of what I will call "persistent nearness," and thus a readiness to relate all of one's experiences, in this case through the lens of the study and knowledge of the Word and prayer. Readiness comes because the Word is known well and frequently reviewed.

John Stott says that "the Christian pastor is primarily called to the ministry of the Word, the study of Scripture is one of his foremost responsibilities."⁸ At every ordination service I have attended, the ordinand promises to do this. At every installation service such promises were made as well. Scripture itself calls us as pastors to commit ourselves and those we live with and serve to do as much—but especially the leader.

⁶ Kempis, *Imitation of Christ*, 37.

⁷ Acts 6:4; unless otherwise indicated, Scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible.

⁸ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 181.

The consequences of not knowing and studying God's Word are truly a matter of life and death for us and for those in our charge. If David had obeyed the call of Scripture for the king to "write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll,"⁹ it is hard for me to imagine that he would not have remembered that there were detailed descriptions of how to transport the Ark of the Covenant from one place to another. Even if he did not remember exactly, he would have then checked and Uzzah would not have died.¹⁰ Was there, perhaps, no one who knew, or perhaps who thought it mattered? I might like to lay special blame for this death on the priests—surely they should have known. An answer to such questions and proper laying of blame is not our concern. We do, however, want to be aware of the consequences of not knowing God's Word and not rightly applying it to the issues of our day.

David was anointed and called to be the king, which did not abrogate any necessary call to study and preparation. The call brought with it additional requirements for study and preparation. He was to make for himself his own copy of the Law, and it was to "be with him . . . all the days of his life." He was to "read it all the days of his life."¹¹

The apostle Paul was already extremely educated, and yet almost the first thing that he did was go to Arabia. Even when he returned and went to Jerusalem, that visit also was one given in a large part to study.¹² Paul was acquainting himself with the history (*ιστορησαι / ιστορέω*) of the work of the disciples and Jesus' teaching. He had a call that was clearly surrounded with the supernatural breaking in of God. The vision on

⁹ Deut 17:18.

¹⁰ Exod 25:14; 2 Sam 6:1-7.

¹¹ Deut 17:19.

¹² Gal 1:14-20.

the road to Damascus may have been evident only to him, but there was also the word that came to Ananias about Paul and the subsequent miracle. Paul did not rest on that religious experience. As important as it was to him all through his life, he continued in study, now, to be sure, with a new perspective from these experiences.

We are all called to continual study no matter at what point we are in our walk with Christ, just beginning or nearing the close of our earthly sojourn. In doing this we will be a blessing to others, and we will be blessed as well. In fact, we must be careful to make ourselves a focus of our studies.¹³ We will speak more of this, but let us look now at some Old Testaments words that illuminate our call to study. We will see that not only was the king called to study and teach God's Word, but we are all called to do this for ourselves and for those around us. This is an essential and powerful way of encouraging oneself and others.¹⁴

One of the most common of the Old Testament words for study is הָגַח / *hgh*. The word can be translated "moan," "growl," "utter," "speak," or "muse."¹⁵ I believe it is first used in a verse that many memorize, Joshua 1:8; the word in that verse is sometimes translated "recite," "study," or "meditate" in various English translations. Another famous use of the word is in the opening psalm, blessed is the one whose "delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night."¹⁶

The prophet Isaiah uses the word in a poignant way to speak of how God will come down to fight for us, and here it is translated "growls," "growling," and "roars."

¹³ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1978), 65.

¹⁴ See Heb 3:13; 10:25; and other texts.

¹⁵ F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1979), 211; James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible with Dictionaries of the Hebrew and Greek Words* (McLean, VA: MacDonald, 1980), 1897—Hebrew.

¹⁶ Ps 1:2.

The word is used to illustrate and compare a lion growling or roaring over his recent kill and how in his hunger he is not frightened and does not run away even when approached to how God will defend us.¹⁷ This speaks powerfully to me to illustrate how I am to study and to be focused and protective of my time and understanding of God’s Word.

The concept of study in the Old Testament clearly carries the call for recitation and memorization. In the course of meditating, much memorization and internalizing will surely take place. The words above carry that meaning, and the next word makes the call to this practice even clearer.

The Hebrew word יִשְׁרַט / *šnn* is translated “repeat,” “teach diligently,” “contend,” “sharpen,” or “prick.”¹⁸ The word seems to be first used in Deuteronomy 6:7 and is usually translated “teach” or “teach diligently” in this passage.¹⁹ The word itself and the context clearly portray a required incessancy to this essential task of talking and teaching about the works and commandments of God. If something left undone causes catastrophe, it is not hyperbole to call it essential.²⁰

It has been well said that one powerful method of learning, which should be employed as part of learning, is to be thinking about how one would share what one is reading and/or learning with someone else within forty-eight hours.²¹ This wisdom was embodied in this direction thousands of years earlier from God’s Word telling us that our own understanding and blessing would proceed in a large part from our sharing what we have read, learned, and experienced about God and his faithfulness to us. It is a much

¹⁷ Is 31:4.

¹⁸ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 1041; Strong, *Exhaustive Concordance*, 8150—Hebrew.

¹⁹ George Wigram, *The Englishman’s Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance of the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984), 1315.

²⁰ Deut 6:14-15 and other texts.

²¹ Stephen Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 60.

observed synergy of God’s economy. What teacher/preacher who prepared well has not felt that he was the most blessed before, during, and after the time of sharing? The listener can honestly declare having been richly blessed, and yet, as one preacher told me long ago—I preach an even better sermon to myself in the car on the way home.²²

Another Hebrew word associated with study is קָרַא / *qārā*. It is a common word in the Old Testament, used at least 735 times.²³ More than 650 times it is translated “call,” “cry,” “proclaim,” or “preach.” In Deuteronomy 17:19 it is generally translated “read” and is translated this way in more than twenty other cases. It was a most curious set of translations of the same word, and as I studied more, I was struck by the fact that our reading of the Bible is a calling upon this help of all helps. And I think that in our most important of reading—that of God’s Word—we then call upon it and proclaim it to ourselves and others in so much of what we do. We know that we call out to God in our prayers, and prayer is to be an integral part of study (as we begin and as we continue studying), but the reading itself is a calling. The calling is two-sided: our calling on God and God calling to us. In fact, it is a visceral calling given the understanding of the Word being living and active. The root of this Hebrew word means literally an “accosting . . . to encounter, whether accidentally or in a hostile manner.”²⁴

One more Old Testament word on study that has especially illuminated the subject for me is סִיחָה / *sīyāh*. This word is translated “complain,”²⁵ “talk,”²⁶ “sigh,”²⁷

²² Dr. Robert Roberts told me this while walking along a beach at Camp Wightman in Connecticut in 1987.

²³ Wigram, *Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance*, 1117-22; Strong, *Exhaustive Concordance*, 7121—Hebrew.

²⁴ Wigram, *Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance*, 21.

²⁵ Ps 55:17 and other texts; Strong, *Exhaustive Concordance*, 7878—Hebrew.

²⁶ Ps 69:12 and other texts.

²⁷ Ps 69:12 and other texts.

“meditate,”²⁸ “muse,”²⁹ or “speak.”³⁰ This, again, is a word that embodies the fullness of the purpose and outcome of study and not just a demonstration of the efficiency of the Hebrew vocabulary. We meditate, muse, and sigh, but out of this come the telling and knowing of what God has done and is calling us to. As Job declares, “Speak to the earth, and let it teach you; And let the fish of the sea declare to you.”³¹ There is a story of the rabbi who would go to a pond every day to hear the songs that the frogs sang in praise to God and was mightily blessed.³²

Before we leave our study of specific words regarding our biblical call to study, we must look to perhaps the clearest directions on the subject given for ministry leaders by the apostle Paul to his “son in the faith,”³³ Timothy, who had been called to the ministry, assigned as a pastor, and had experience working side by side with Paul himself. He and Titus had authority to appoint overseers and elders.³⁴ He had learned much, but even he was given clear and repeated directions to continue to study.³⁵

Timothy was called and ordained. Prophecies were made about him.³⁶ He was probably specifically chosen for this particular assignment by prophetic leading of the church leaders. This is noted in every commentary I have read. Yet even in the fulfilling of this specific assignment he is called on repeatedly to study. He is told that it would be an ongoing necessity. He had learned much, much truth and much doctrine, and yet it

²⁸ Ps 77:6 and other texts.

²⁹ Ps 77:12 and other texts.

³⁰ Ps 105:2 and other texts, New American Standard Bible; “talk” or “tell” in other English translations.

³¹ Job 12:8.

³² Martin Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim: Early Masters* (New York, NY: Schocken, 1948), 111.

³³ 1 Tim 1:2, King James Version and others.

³⁴ 1 Tim 3:2; 5:17, 22; Tit 1:5.

³⁵ 1 Tim 4:13-16; 2 Tim 2:15 and other texts.

³⁶ 1 Tim 1:18.

would seem continued study was called for in order to maintain a vibrant teaching ministry and for the purpose of godliness.³⁷

Timothy would have to train, exercise, work, and study in order to not fall into the incorrect thinking of those to whom he had been sent. Eugene Peterson translates 1 Tim 4:7b, “Exercise daily in God—no spiritual flabbiness, please!” Right before that admonition is the warning of staying “clear of silly stories.”³⁸ And before that he had been told that he had been raised on the message of sound faith and had followed it for years. Why these subsequent, immediate, and repeated warnings? Because we must continually be studying to stay sharp, as the Old Testament Hebrew יָשַׁן/*snn* tells us. Even a great knife when used for tough and dirty jobs has to be cleaned and whetted in order to continue to be sharp and useful.

In preaching “The Mystery of Godliness” from 1 Tim 3:16, John Calvin says, “The devil hath bestowed all his art to pervert this doctrine; seeing that our salvation is grounded thereon. We should therefore be so much the more confirmed and strengthened in it; that we may never be shaken, but stand steadfast in the faith, which is contained in the gospel.”³⁹ We must study the doctrine for our own sake and the sake of those whom we are charged to care for. Standing steadfast requires regular, steady, and constant practice and exercise.

One thing that is especially observed about the Pastoral Epistles is the emphasis on doctrine; this and the significant numbers of *hapax legomena* in these writings have caused some to doubt it to be part of the Pauline corpus. The authorship would be an

³⁷ 1 Tim 1:18, specifically “fighting the good fight,” New International Version; 1 Tim 4:7.

³⁸ 1 Tim 4:17, The Message.

³⁹ *A Treasury of Great Preaching*, vol.1, John Calvin (WORDSearch Corporation, 2007), sermon 4.

interesting and important exercise for future study, but for now I will remind readers of the fact that this is a canonical book with valuable directions for ministerial leaders.

The word *doctrine* (διδασκαλία) is in a sense neutral, for it can refer to any teaching or learning. We are even directed to beware of false doctrines, even the doctrines or teachings of demons.⁴⁰ (διδαχή is often translated “doctrine” in the older English translations but is usually translated “teaching” or “instruction” in modern English translations.) The Scriptures will either use a definite article or an adjective such as “sound” (ύγιαίνω) or “good” (καλός) to make it clear that what is being referenced are the traditions and teachings of Scripture.⁴¹

We are called to study these and thereby keep ourselves sharp, focused, and clear so that we can recognize that which is false no matter how cleverly disguised. Those who want to be able to recognize counterfeit money, I am told, study the “real stuff” and then, when they see the counterfeit, no matter what type of counterfeit, they know that it is counterfeit. It is like “other doctrine” (έτεροδιδασκαλέω).⁴²

We must know what is sound doctrine well enough to be able to follow it even if no one else around us is. In other words, we must know sound doctrine well enough to be able to lead others toward it, into it, and on along that path that is narrow but alone leads to eternal life. The wrong path is broad and easy to find; little study if any is necessary to find and follow the broad path of error. If the right path were easy, Paul would not be writing to these good men, giving needful encouragement to them.

⁴⁰ 1 Tim 4:1; Strong, *Exhaustive Concordance*, 1319—Greek.

⁴¹ 2 Tim 4:2; 1 Cor 14:6, for example; Strong, *Exhaustive Concordance*, 1322—Greek; 1 Tim 1:10; Strong, *Exhaustive Concordance*, 5198—Greek; 1 Tim 4:6; Strong, *Exhaustive Concordance*, 2570—Greek.

⁴² 1 Tim 1:3; 6:3; Strong, *Exhaustive Concordance*, 2085—Greek.

Sound doctrine is necessary for us and for those we lead as well. And as much as Paul tells Titus and Timothy to study the doctrine, he tells them to teach it and to command it.⁴³ As Calvin declared in a sermon on 2 Tim 2:16-18, “Pure Preaching of the Word,” “Therefore, if we go not about the salvation of the people, that they may receive nourishment by the doctrine that is taught them, it is sacrilege; for we pervert the pure use of the Word of God.”⁴⁴

While Paul calls for gentleness,⁴⁵ he makes it clear that the work is hard, calling it a fight and calling for perseverance.⁴⁶ It is something that we will be ready to do only if we are constantly committed to studying the Word of God. It will not ever be easy; there will be many distractions. We must be like that lion growling over his food, as Isaiah describes, with regards to our study and protecting our flock from false doctrine.

Think back to the earthy meanings of the few Hebrew words that we highlighted. There was a literal physicality, with emotion, passion, and intense focus. This is what the leader is called on to do as he or she struggles, studies, and investigates the application of doctrine and truth to the issues of our day. Our people will see this and realize that we are not just throwing down lightning-bolt decrees and demands that are not realistic or compassionate—because we will not be. When we show ourselves to be “rightly dividing the word of truth,”⁴⁷ they will find the teaching truly helpful. “More strongly put: It is dangerous . . . for ministry to be practiced without good foundation in Scripture and tradition, reason and experience.”⁴⁸

⁴³ 1 Tim 4:11.

⁴⁴ *A Treasury of Great Preaching*, vol.1, John Calvin, sermon 7.

⁴⁵ 1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 2:25; Tit 3:2.

⁴⁶ 1 Tim 1:18; 6:12; 2 Tim 1:8; 4:1-8.

⁴⁷ 2 Tim 2:15, King James Version.

⁴⁸ Thomas C. Oden, *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1983), xii.

Even beginning students can trace these words more closely for themselves. The blessing will be manifold and great. Studying the Bible word by word is a great blessing and will keep us from feeling personally empty and having the sense that we do not have anything to share. May we never share that which is not solidly grounded in the doctrine of Scripture.

If one does not already have Hebrew and Greek dictionaries, concordances, and word studies, these are necessities for a Christian leader to have, to know how to use and to use regularly. I have gone through my footnotes in this chapter and added Strong's numbering in almost all the footnotes that refer to the use of Greek or Hebrew words. One may think because it is from the King James Version that it is not particularly useful today, but almost all word study books, dictionaries, and concordances of all languages use Strong's numbering. With these numbers one can begin to study deeply the Word of God for oneself. Do not stop here, but neither must one skip the fundamental study of the words of God's Word.

Practical and Personal Benefits to Study

Bible Study Tools

I am confronted frequently with complaints from lay chaplains who were not able to explain something from Scripture and who were not aware of passages from Scripture. I usually do not give much thought to such complaints; often it may be that the chaplain's explanation was not understood or liked. However, I am reminded of a group conversation I overheard during a break in a conference after a speaker had referred to the story of the Shunammite woman. The chaplains thought it was a great story and

wondered who the prophet was and where the story was. When the consensus was that it was not known, I interjected, “Elisha in Second Kings.” We may rightly say that certain passages are not essential to doctrine or the faith, but I think this is symptomatic of a lack of attention to the Scriptures. Furthermore, to be aware of them and to comment on them is so important to the people we minister to. The comfort that we can give just to be able to say that we are aware of the passage and have struggled with that passage as well, concluding with a statement of how it is not central to doctrine, is often of great value to our people.

In another vein I have heard chaplains go to great length to explain how, for example, Jonah’s father was the son of the widow of Zarephath. I asked politely how this was known. I confess that I was unable to follow the explanation and thus recreate it, but it was little more than, to be kind, arguments from silence. This is another way that lack of discipline in our Bible study can confound the people to whom we minister rather than provide edifying comfort and encouragement to them.

One may never have facility with the original languages, but one can learn and grow in skill with the original languages by using them. Even someone who has taken only a course or two of Greek and Hebrew can, through regularly looking into God’s Word through the lens of the original languages, become over time quite good at least at reading the Scriptures. Interlinear Bibles are good, but make sure to have more than one and to check them against the standard Greek Bibles. Have more than one Greek or Hebrew translation as well. I am not wealthy, but I have several. Today many of these tools are practically free through the Internet, but have personal copies even if they are

only digital copies. Bible software is inexpensive, especially when one considers all the literature that comes with it.

All of these tools and more can be carried around in one's laptop, along with hundreds more volumes of commentaries and devotional classics. I cannot quite think of an insurmountable reason for a Christian leader to not have these tools. If you are stymied as to how to acquire these things short of knowing me and asking, discuss it with a friend and your church. I believe these tools will be given unto you. And, don't forget about libraries and librarians.

I think of how a man without the benefit of higher education, William Carey, taught himself Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Dutch, French, and Italian; and even while tilling the soil, he translated the Scriptures. I am too humbled to complain of how difficult it is to understand the various constructions of tenses in different languages. (In fact, reading biographies has been an inspirational, motivating, and even creative blessing.)

Additionally, in the spirit of checking things out for oneself, I do not feel comfortable without following up on a footnote or reference before using it in a message or article or sharing it. I have checked out references many times only to find that they were not correct. Let us not be purveyors of urban myths and misinformation, at least without stating something like, "I am not positive about this," or "So and so said in their book."

Studying the Bible as Literature

One of the joys of studying God's Word directly for oneself is knowing that what one is reading has been through tests that no other literary work has gone through and has

passed all these test that no other literary work could pass. Having said that, be sure and study the Bible as literature. Study it word for word and what those words meant in the culture that they were written, the times that they were written, and by the person who was writing them. It is true that as “Classicus tells his young man, he must not think that he has done enough when he has only learned languages; but that he must be daily conversant with the best authors, read them again and again, catch their spirit by living with them, and that there is no other way of becoming like them, or of making himself a man of taste and judgment . . . [this is the] only means of entering into their spirit, and forming his own judgment.”⁴⁹ William Law goes on to speak of how we are taught to read commentaries on the classics, to commit much of the great writers to memory, and that we should do no less with the Bible.

Study and teaching of the Bible and how its doctrine is rightly applied calls for a great depth and breadth of subjects to be part of the Christian leader’s area of reading and reflection. “It actually consists of several subdisciplines. It’s much like a university comprised of many colleges, each specializing in a different discipline, yet all united under the general name of the university.”⁵⁰ This necessarily calls us into fellowship and consultation with experts in these areas through reading but also through actively communicating with them. You will find that many people are happy to find someone interested in their field of expertise and willing to share their work and discoveries. This is a “partnership [where] . . . clergy and laity rejoice in the variety of gifts which God has given, and help each other to use their gifts and fulfill their callings for the building up of

⁴⁹ William Law, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life: Adapted to the State and Condition of All Orders of Christians* (1729; WORDsearch Corporation, 2007), 95.

⁵⁰ Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991), 29.

Christ's Body.”⁵¹ Be sure to include people from all walks of life, from the most highly educated to those who struggle to find a place in this world where they may eke out a living, and the young, elderly, and in-between.

This fellowship will also help to make our communications and teachings be deeply received because there will be a clear relevance to them. We will, as a matter of course, be studying our setting and people. The illustrations that will be incorporated in our lessons will be much more cogent. Just as Jesus told parables that were and are powerfully penetrating and memorable because they were from the lives of the people to whom he was speaking, so we will also create stories and illustrations that are meaningful and applicable.

Studying the Place to Which One Has Been Called

The following is another example of why it is important for the Christian leader to become familiar with the place to which he or she has been called. I know of a chaplain in a nursing home. He had been there for several years when this incident was observed. A resident of the home who was suffering with senile dementia of the Alzheimer's type approached the chaplain in the hallway, said she was looking for her husband, and asked him if he had seen her husband. He reminded her that her husband was dead. For the resident it was as if she learned of her husband's death for the first time. She was extremely distraught, and other staff considered the chaplain's conduct to be callous at best. An already overworked staff was left with another crisis to defuse. They all knew that the right way to deal with a resident with such a diagnosis is to practice what is called validation therapy. Anyone else in the nursing home would assured the resident

⁵¹ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 206; see also 1 Pet 4:10.

that she needn't worry, perhaps walk with the resident for a bit, talk to her, maybe compliment her on the color of her sweater, and she would soon be thinking about something else. This practice is not considered by anyone to be bearing false witness but rather being sensitive and kind. This chaplain should have known this within a month or two of becoming the chaplain of this home, and yet even after several years he conducted himself this way. I was a pastor in the area and part-time chaplain in that home and took it upon myself to discuss this with him later that day, but I cannot say fully what long-term effect the incident may have had on the perception of the clergy.

We can go a long way toward erasing any perception that clergy are not an essential discipline in completing the fullness of the racing mission and even be sought after for advice and input by demonstrating an active interest in the lives of the people and places to which we have been called. I am currently a chaplain at a racetrack, and I make a point of going to the orientation training for new jockeys. I could just show up to introduce myself and speak a few words of welcome, but I make a point of staying there for most if not all of the speakers and teaching. I have learned a lot about the life of a jockey and all the other disciplines and occupations of the few thousand people that work at the racetrack. If I were at the track for twenty years I would not have learned half of what I have learned from attending these sessions, to say nothing of the good will that I have been told my simply being present evokes.

I remember reading of the low regard of the clergy in Booker T. Washington's autobiography, *Up from Slavery*.⁵² He spoke of how going into the ministry was considered a way of getting out of having to work. I have never forgotten that and try my best to be seen as someone who is interested and helpful. I do not mean that we should

⁵² Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery* (1901; New York, NY: Airmont Books, 1967), 84.

spend so much time doing such things that we exhaust ourselves and do not have time to do the necessary study which we have been speaking of, but, for example, shoveling someone's sidewalk can provide some necessary exercise and sincerely demonstrate love to that person and instill good will to the whole family who are told of it. Volunteering to coach or help coach a sports team gave me some quality exercise and fun. It also allowed me into the lives of people I would never see at a Bible study. They were able to see clergy as not just those who pray for them (as we did before games and at practice) but also those who were interested and helpful in a practical way. These are examples meant to stir up creativity as the Lord would lead you in your unique parish and with your unique set of gifts. As the saying goes, "We don't want to be so heavenly minded that we are no earthly good."

So, as we study God's Word, we study in light of the people we minister to, and then study the people to whom God has sent us. Our carrying of God's message will be powerful and penetrating if we are also studying the setting and are involved in the lives of the people to whom we are speaking, teaching, and pastoring.

Shed Imposed Notions about Competency

One of the most powerful stops to study and growth is imposed notions regarding one's competency and capabilities. There may have been declarations from people in the past that became over time self-imposed, but they become self-fulfilling prophecies regarding who I am and what I can do. I deal with people often who say that they will not be able to pass a test that is required for something that will greatly improve their life because they have never been able to study and learn. They, but for the encouragement

from someone showing that their conclusion does not have to be a necessary outcome, would not even try to do what they would like to do and what will be a great blessing to them and others.

What are these good reasons that the predictions and outcomes of the past do not have to be categorical outcomes for the future? One good reason is that though we may in and of ourselves be powerless to do something, God is able to help us do that which we could not and cannot do on our own.⁵³

As a teacher I have seen students who were performing many grade levels below their ages, and their parents had been told that there was little or no hope of their child being able to learn to read, but with creative methods and probably some developmental growth on the part of some of the children they became average and even above average students. We will never know how many people, by the vast differences in developmental ages alone, have given up on themselves and had those around them give up on them. There are famous examples: Thomas Edison's fourth grade teacher concluded that his brain was addled. We know of this example because of his obstinacy and numerous inventions. How many more people just accepted similar prophecies?

There are many called to leadership in the church who are among these. In the racetracks where I work there are many itinerant chaplains who barely graduated high school. I work weekly with two men who are both bi-vocational and have been recognized by congregations as pastors. They also realize their need to know much more. We meet in my office for prayer and fellowship. We also are disciplined about reading and planning for the next class that will be taken toward the next degree. We talk about what Scriptures we are studying and teaching. They have been called—there is no denial

⁵³ See Rom 7:18; 2 Cor 12:9; Phil 2:13.

of that. So were Timothy and Titus called to study and have their progress evident to all.⁵⁴ Adults and young adults who were not able to be successful in the classrooms of their youth may now be ready to excel if they try.

There is much educational research showing us the breadth of intelligence, most of which is neither measured nor rewarded in the traditional classroom. Robert Sternberg and Richard Wagner's triarchic theory of intelligence is compelling, and yet we measure only one of their three aspects of intelligence. Another well-recognized intelligence researcher is Howard Gardner. At last count he had quantified nine types of intelligences, and only two of his delineations are measured on traditional IQ tests.⁵⁵

Even by the 1920s Jean Piaget was becoming aware of how developmental stages determined the capacity to learn.⁵⁶ These discoveries have been applied to adult education as well and are well corroborated.⁵⁷ Piaget himself followed this in practice in the training prescribed for teachers. The point for our case is that the developmental stage can be picked up where it may have been aborted. A rather crude but compelling example is the person who never read a book before and at the age of fifty begins to read one or more books per week with great understanding. Or the person who never learned to read but does at the age of seventy!

The findings of later educational theorists such as the larger school of cognitivists (which of course included Piaget), constructivism, and brain-based learning have shown how experience is critical to development and cognition. This experience can come with

⁵⁴ 1 Tim 4:15.

⁵⁵ Helen Bee, *The Developing Child*, 9th ed. (Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 2000), 206-7.

⁵⁶ Jean Piaget, *Science of Education and the Psychology of the Child*, trans. Derek Coltman (New York, NY: Viking, 1970), 12.

⁵⁷ Patricia M. King and Karen Strohm Kitchener, *Developing Reflective Judgment* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1994), 15.

age. If recognized and nurtured, the high school dropout can become the summa cum laude of the university.

There is a method that I refer to as the 3Rs that my students and I find most helpful. They are reading, reflection, and ’riting. They are an important triad to learning well the things that we are studying. We read, then reflect upon it prayerfully, and in conversation with others as well. Third, we write about it. Writing has been compared with a mirror. As a mirror reflects our body, so does writing reflect our thoughts. We may not have to write a sermon, or are even required to give it without notes, but writing our thoughts is helpful in clarifying our thinking, just as taking notes on a book or lecture will help us distill the subject. If we cannot do this, we may not understand what we have been studying. This will call us to more discussion, reading, and reflection.

I believe the most important thing is to never stop—especially studying God’s Word. We must continue.⁵⁸ I think of the great prophet Samuel, so great the Lord tells Jeremiah that “even though Moses and Samuel were to stand before Me, My heart would not be with this people.”⁵⁹ Even a man as great as this needed to receive continual guidance from the Lord or he would not do the right thing. For example, Samuel was sent by God to Bethlehem to the house of Jesse to anoint one of his sons, and when Samuel saw Eliab he was ready to anoint him.⁶⁰ But God directed Samuel that Eliab was not the man to be anointed.

We have the promise that if we ask we shall we receive.⁶¹ Even wisdom will be given generously to all who ask.⁶² Remember that though we are called to teach and share

⁵⁸ Col 1:23; 2:6; 1 Tim 4:16.

⁵⁹ Jer 15:1.

⁶⁰ 1 Sam 16:6.

⁶¹ Matt 7:8.

this wisdom and doctrine, the number one purpose for our study is to grow in godliness.⁶³

The great preacher of the Free Church of Scotland, Alexander Whyte, even when he was no longer able to preach, would rise every morning to prepare a sermon. “He did so until the day he died. He was convinced that study of the Word was essential.”⁶⁴

In future chapters we will look at other subjects: people skills, leadership skills, and self-care, for the chaplain is called on to be familiar with many subjects. Perhaps we have read much on all of these subjects. In order to keep the saw sharp we must continue with our studies and have a program of study that we have developed that will help lead us into the future and keep us from stopping no matter how the exigencies of life will seek to distract us.

Clergy in parishes are given authority by a congregation or ecclesiastical body. Chaplains also receive authority, but from the institution that employs them, and many chaplains additionally receive endorsement from a professional organization, or ecclesiastical body. For the authority and endorsements validity and recognition to remain well respected the individual chaplains must be responsible practitioners who competently meet the needs of the people of the organizations they serve. This next section will discuss how a chaplain can do this day after day, and year after year.

⁶² Jas 1:5.

⁶³ 1 Tim 4:7.

⁶⁴ Rod Mattoon, *Treasures from Treasured Psalms*, vol. 3 (WORDsearch Corporation, 2010), 196.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

At first it might seem that there is a paucity of literature reviewing and directing the work of racetrack chaplains and racetrack chaplaincies. That is one reason why the Racetrack Chaplaincy Handbook (see Appendix A) was such a necessary project for my ministry. However, when we realize that the work of the racetrack chaplain has many important similarities to the work of the parish pastor, an apologist, and the Christian who wishes to live out, to cogently present, and to defend his or her faith, there opened up many relevant writings that would help prepare a racetrack chaplain to do his or her work. There is also some great writing on the work of chaplains generally, and some of those will be reviewed in this chapter. Those works and others can be located with the help of the bibliography.

One thing that almost all of the chosen writings have in common is that they help the chaplain to remain grounded in Scripture. There are many directions in which a chaplain will be pushed and pulled, and many of them will seem important. There are only a few that the chaplain needs to focus on and stay focused on. I believe they are good self-care, showing forth the love of God in caring for the needs of the community in which the chaplaincy is placed, and being able to give guidance that is scripturally sound and necessarily demonstrates the value and the wisdom in Scripture in a winsome way.

Taking Care of the Self

The chaplain will often be called to counsel people going through times of great stress. It is important for the chaplain to approach these times from a position of health and strength in his or her own spirit. *Preventing Ministry Failure* by Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffmann is a helpful book that can prepare the chaplain to have a healthy basis in his or her own life from which to address the stress and trials that they have to deal with every day. This sobering book from the beginning seizes one's attention with shockingly staggering statistics and illustrations of pastors. If one does not see himself in the statistics, certainly the illustrations illuminated my character, and the questions, tests, and assessments shone all the more light on who I am. I shared some of the statistics with pastor groups that I meet with because I couldn't get them out of my mind. I felt like Nehemiah upon hearing of the state of affairs in Jerusalem. I also, while not reading too much into expressions, wanted to see the reactions of the group as I read the reports.

This is very much a workbook with many questions that readers are asked to answer. I have talked about it with many people, and one young pastor who I meet with every other Tuesday ordered the book for himself. Part of the reason for talking of it with others is because the book at several points calls on the reader to ask questions of others and even have them fill out some of the evaluations. If someone does not have a level 4 or level 5 friendship, in the course of working through this book, such a friendship should begin to develop, it seems to me. This book has been therapeutic for me.

Preventing Ministry Failure calls on one to examine oneself, with the help of this book, Scripture, and others, in seven areas: intimacy, calling, stress management,

boundaries, recreation, people skills, and leadership skills. The sequence is intentional and purposeful.

The section on intimacy helped me in several ways. It helped me to evaluate the friendships that I have, determining whether I wanted to invest more or less into certain ones. It helped me to realize that I am blessed with good friends and to be grateful and express my gratitude for these friendships. It also helped me to realize consciously how some relationships are a drain even if one is a complete extravert and to be more careful with regard to my interactions with these people “who desire that ‘special’ relationship with their minister.”¹

The section on calling helped me to cherish my call. Next to the intimacy foundation stone, calling is the most important to keeping the pastor from falling. “The call into the ministry is the possession of a ‘knowing’ initiated and sustained by God and validated by Scripture.”² I reflected, was reminded, and was reassured of the continuing aspect of my call as I realized that I do not want to do anything other than what I am doing now—pastoring and chaplaining. There have been times when I tried to escape the call, but I could not. It was not just that God would not let me escape. It was the ultimate awareness that pastoring was what I want to do more than anything else and nothing else will allow me to have a sense of resting in God, which is the primary purpose.

The third foundation stone, stress management, brought the encouragement I need to take care of myself. It also brought with it an increased awareness of when I am not managing stress properly. This section was a segue for me to following foundation stones

¹ Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure: A ShepherdCare Guide for Pastors, Ministers, and Other Caregivers* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 60.

² Wilson and Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure*, 72.

when it spoke of stress responses being so connected to lifestyle, personality, and perceptions.

The boundaries foundation stone started to get personal just when I thought, if I thought, I was going to get away without having to have an “ectomy” (a neologism I made up, meaning surgical removal). In this case it is a bit of a play on words because I was and am being called to put up boundaries but also remove the insecurities that cause me not to have sufficient boundaries to begin with.

Speaking of boundaries, if I don’t have them well in place how will I be able to have a solidly placed foundation stone of recreation? Recreation for me can be just another thing that I have to do. I exercise, for instance, and as I am getting older and need to be more careful, without good boundaries I can hurt myself, and sometimes do because I am pushing myself too hard. Realizing how quickly my daughters have grown up or nearly grown up is helping me realize that I want to slow down and take time to enjoy them. My wife is probably my best gauge in regard to recreation. I need some external gauges, as my internal ones do not function very well. If I relied on them I would blow a gasket before their warning signals would go off.

The foundation stone of people skills gives opportunities for feedback. I gave several people the MinistryStyles report. The scores were not too surprising, but I did think that there would be different scores depending on who was filling them out. I thought that my wife would have different scores than my secretary. The scores were virtually the same across the board. They were not exactly the same I gave myself, but I do feel that I was scoring myself more like the way I wanted to be. The section on active listening, section 2, was very helpful. I don’t remember such a succinct statement on this

subject.³ I believe that section 4, assertiveness techniques, will help me to establish healthy boundaries as these techniques will assist me in clearly communicating them.

Last, the foundation stone of leadership skills approached leadership a bit differently than the books on leadership that I have read through the years. I read several books on leadership, and it was always because the book was assigned to me by a professor or other superior. This helped me see practical applications and connections between personality and leadership. It was not a matter of simply saying this is what good leadership is and this is how you do it. “A traditional church setting . . . exhibits a wide variety of subcultures . . . requiring a minister to wear a blue-collar collaborative style among several subcultures, a corporate style with the younger people to mature them . . . and a dinner party style to reconnect senior adults who feel alienated . . . all while modeling a faith-walk before the entire congregation and providing Fieldmaster leadership to keep them excited about the direction of the ministry.”⁴

A chaplaincy setting is very much the same. The stresses and strains call for ongoing self-care and submitting to the care of others. Centuries ago, Richard Baxter listed four groups of people who need special attention: the immature, those with a particular corruption, declining Christians, and the strong. The last group, he declared, needed the greatest care.⁵ This has always been a reminder to me. Though I may be well trained—strong—I need rigorous and regular preventative maintenance.

For me, submitting to spiritual mentoring and committing the time to being a spiritual mentor has been the best means of self-care. There are many good books on this subject, some published in the past couple of decades and some from the past couple of

³ Wilson and Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure*, 201-5.

⁴ Wilson and Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure*, 237.

⁵ Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (1656; East Peoria, IL: Versa Press, 1974), 97-100.

millennia. *Spiritual Mentoring*, by Keith R. Anderson and Randy D. Reese, is one that looks at being a mentor and a mentee through the ages. The study begins with Augustine in a clearly delineated way but has many examples from Scripture that take readers back even further. There are several appendices that allow for systematic, continuing work in this area.

One powerfully motivating point that is brought out many times is that some of the best mentors have been members of the laity who would never consider themselves spiritual guides or mentors. Keith Anderson shares an example from when he was a young college student:

His name was Chuck, and we were as different in background as two men could be. I was a young man on my way through “higher education,” an inflated term if the goal is to develop persons; he was near retirement and had an eighth-grade education. I was of the privileged middle class; he was not. I am white. He is African-American. I grew up in the northern city and suburbs of Chicago, he in the rural south. He was the custodian whose job all day was to empty the baskets of “important” people . . . But Chuck was a man who had something I came to cherish—commonsense wisdom that grew out of his faith and his life experience. He was a sage, a seer, a wise man who could see more deeply into my life than most I have ever known since that time. In time we opened to one another, and he taught me much as we met . . . His words didn’t add much information to my ongoing education in theology, but they continue to shape me as a person to this day.⁶

Eugene Peterson had a similar experience, at the age of twenty, while home from college for the summer and anxious for spiritual conversation. He was guided by the jack-of-all-trades in the small Montana town:

My first spiritual director didn’t know he was a spiritual director. He had never so as heard the term spiritual director, and neither had I. But our mutual ignorance of terminology did not prevent the work. We were both doing something for which we had no name. For a summer of Tuesday and Thursday evenings we met, conversing and praying in the prayer room in the church basement. We got on

⁶ Keith R. Anderson and Randy B. Reese, *Spiritual Mentoring: A Guide for Seeking and Giving Direction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 21-22.

well. He was not only the first but among the best of the spiritual directors I have had . . . It was accomplished by means of Reuben's prayerful listening. He had nothing to tell me, although he freely talked about himself when it was appropriate. But he never took over.⁷

This is also an example of short-term spiritual mentoring. It was profoundly effective and helpful. Imagine if Reuben said he should not bother because Eugene would be there only for the summer. As racetrack chaplains we often will have someone at our tracks for a few weeks (sometimes a few days), and yet we can have profound effects on those who are passing through for a big race with their horse.

There was one man who recently left my track. He had been with us for only a couple of months. He was speaking with my secretary, waiting for me to call him in to my office while I finished some notes. He shared with her how much he had grown over the winter. He said he had paid all his debts. He said he didn't owe anybody anything. For the first time he could remember he wasn't hiding from people he owed money. Then he said, "Except for the chaplain—I owe him a lot." What had I done for him? I had let him make coffee for me and him after the pot was shut off for the day. I let him come into my office and sit. I would listen and sometimes even do some work simultaneously, yet he felt I had helped him "get his life together." This has happened many times.

We have already begun to overlap to our next section, showing forth love. Entering into spiritual mentoring is an act of love. It is, I believe, a fundamental practice of loving your neighbor as yourself. It is a following of the Golden Rule and doing unto others what you would have them do unto you.

⁷ Eugene Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 185.

Spiritual mentoring is also a powerful part of good self-care. It can be frustrating, disappointing, and heart breaking when someone “lets us down” and/or lets himself or herself down—discontinues the path of growth and starts practicing self-destructive behavior. It also is a powerful motivation and a type of accountability to the mentee. I have remembered Thomas Carlyle’s quote, “Be what you would have your pupils to be,”⁸ many times, and it has been a helpful incentive for me to do those things that will help me to remain healthy.

Practicing Love Toward One’s Neighbor

There are three books to mention and discuss as we begin this section. I will list them to emphasize the importance for the reader to read them for himself or herself. First is Curtis L. Barrett and Don C. Clippinger’s seminal work, *Winners! The Story of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs in the Horse Racing Industry*. This is the most uniquely specific book that is relevant to chaplains at racetracks in their dealings with those struggling with substance abuse and gambling addiction. Second is Scott Floyd’s work, *Crisis Counseling: A Guide for Pastors and Professionals*, which faces the reality of the crises that chaplains find themselves in the midst of and gives them some basic tools to help those in crisis and handle the stress of being in those situations for the chaplain as well. Third is Charles Allen Kollar’s *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling: An Effective Short-Term Approach for Getting People Back on Track*, which helps the chaplain deal with the limited amount of time that he or she has for each individual, and the limited

⁸ I have seen this in several articles and even a poster, but I have not seen it in a work written by Carlyle. The next part of the quote, not as often included is, “All other teaching is unblessed mockery and apery.”

amount of time that individuals will commit before they need to have a sense of hope or stop coming to meetings.

There is a fourth book, *Muddy Shoes: A Ministry in the Mud and Dirt of the Horse Tracks*, by Norman Evans. This is rather autobiographical and it helps one to see how the Lord can uniquely and individually work in the life of the chaplain, all along preparing the chaplain to live out his or her calling. It was a great blessing to me to hear directly of the experiences of a very successful racetrack chaplain. Evans's honesty helped me feel better about the slow and little success I perceived in my chaplaincy. It also gave me daily direction for planning a general day at the racetrack for a chaplain that would be effective use of time. I will discuss this more at the end of this section because it will also serve as a segue to the section on showing forth truth.

One of the first jobs for the chaplain who is trying to get funding for a substance abuse program is to develop the idea with management and managers of the cost effectiveness and safety aspect of having a program. For example, a horse owner was asked about the staff he had training his horses. It was clear that his trainer was an alcoholic and actively drinking amid the grooming of his horse. The owner was asked to consider a business man who had a trucking line and had just spent fifty thousand dollars for a truck, and if he would let that man drive and make deliveries with his truck.⁹ The owner looked as if a bright light had been shined into his eyes and realized it was best for this trainer to be given an ultimatum of going into a drug and alcohol program if he wanted to continue to work for this owner.

⁹ Curtis F. Barrett and Don C. Clippinger, *Winners! The Story of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs in the Horse Racing Industry* (Hightstown, NJ: Daily Racing Form Press, 1997), 30-31.

Substance abuse problems in the isolation and loneliness of a backstretch are believed to be at least double the national average. The national average is usually estimated at 10 percent; on the backstretch it is at least 20 percent.¹⁰ Employees struggling with substance abuse are two times more likely to be absent and three times more likely to be late. These events alone were reported to cost an average of sixty-five thousand dollars in one year. Taking into account the reduced productivity when the worker is at work, there is an added cost of three hundred thousand dollars per year. This is not even taking into consideration the cost of workplace injuries that are a result of substance abuse.¹¹

These realities may not be evident initially to chaplains or chaplaincy boards, but they need to be taken seriously by chaplaincy boards by chaplains individually at racetracks, unless the chaplain happens to have an extremely gifted and engaged board. If the chaplain is to have an effective ministry, it has to be well funded, and in order for it to be well funded an effective case for the chaplaincy must be made and remade by the chaplain. There needs to be ongoing reporting as well. It may eventually be expressed with much thanks, but it must be shown that the funding is cost-effective.

The Rev. John Mayton, an exceptionally gifted chaplain at racetracks in California during the late 1980s and all through the 1990s, is known for establishing substance abuse programs throughout the great and historic racetracks of that state. He is also known for the many people he and his programs helped. One thing that he did was see that the twelfth step of the 12-step program was capitalized upon.¹² Rev. Mayton

¹⁰ 1991 Louisville Conference on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs for the Horse Racing Industry.

¹¹ 1991 Louisville Conference on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs.

¹² The twelfth step says, “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

would facilitate the sharing by some of the famous people he had helped and some of the executives that he had helped to be a catalyst for growing support.

He said that at one point in his tenure he made a serious mistake. As the program grew larger, he forgot who his clients were: “With the trailer packed with substance abusers and people in recovery, he started to believe that they were the clients, when in fact his most important constituency was the board of directors that had hired him, the race-track management, and the trainers. ‘My real client was the industry, and I forgot that.’”¹³

I brought the *Winners* book to a chaplain school that I had organized, and I had invited Scott Floyd, the author of the *Crisis Counseling* book, to be a main presenter. I showed him the quote above because I wondered whether that was crass or callous for a clergyman to think like that. He assured me of the sense and realism that it represented.

Scott Floyd’s book will help the chaplain be prepared to minister to those who are going through the crisis of substance abuse and the many other life crises of those who the chaplain is called to minister. Throughout the book there are case studies that provide practical opportunities for reflective training. In the first four chapters, in order to accomplish the titular task of the book, key terms are examined: crisis, trauma, loss, and grief. Floyd also provides scriptural bases that help to represent the processes those key terms represent, and how and when they occur. In the appendices are symptoms sheets that are practical checklists that can be used when working with those in our chaplaincy communities.

¹³ Barrett and Clippinger, *Winners*, 105-6.

Chapter 5, a transitional chapter, follows individuals through the experiences of crisis, trauma, loss, or grief—showing how these processes interrelate. Then chapters 6 and 7 focus on intervention points—when and how to provide help.

Later chapters are addressed more specifically to ministers and counselors; children and adolescents; and even discuss large-scale disasters. The final chapter attends to the care necessary for the caregivers.

This book will not make anyone an expert, but it will help us be prepared for the work of the chaplain. That work does not call for an expert counselor to do protracted work with scores of individuals. The chaplain will perhaps have to help identify many more and select some who will then be seen for more intense counseling.

Floyd comments early on that he has confronted people who did not see the value in his work, even friends who he respected. He says, “I realized that I was a white blood cell in the body of Christ . . . White blood cells were created by God as the body’s means of attacking these invaders, which have the potential of doing much harm . . . Those who provide crisis ministry function in much the same manner as white blood cells.”¹⁴

Charles Allen Kollar’s *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling* addresses how the chaplain, who does not have the time or training for much protracted counseling, can help people “get back on track,” as the subtitle says.

Not all the people we confront and work with are going through crises. Since the chaplain is probably not billing a third-party payer, he or she is not “required to make his

¹⁴ Scott Floyd, *Crisis Counseling: A Guide for Pastors and Professionals* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2008), 21.

or her diagnosis from the DSM-4.”¹⁵ He or she does not have to give a pathological label to each person he or she sees.

I find it intriguing that 95 percent of admissions to psychiatric centers and of personal psychotherapy sessions are for problems relating to depression and anxiety (Seligman, 1990). These are areas where pastoral competency is at its highest and where the Scripture is most outspoken. Even if the other 5 percent need to be referred to competent godly therapists and psychologists, it would still leave the vast majority in the care of the church.¹⁶

Ministers of the gospel should be solution-focused; indeed, they can be gracefully suggesting the possibility of life without the problem. This is nothing short of a paradigm shift. Kollar calls it “identity formation: the unfolding of God’s grace.”¹⁷

The problem with secular theories of personality development is they do not, and cannot, account for the intention of God for an individual’s life. Nor can they account for the uniqueness of each individual. It is reported that Milton Erickson, a pioneer in the solution-focused therapeutic approach, once wisely said, “I do not have a general theory of personality development because I have never met a general person.”¹⁸

Kollar calls the counselor to consider how he or she may be in agreement with God’s intention for our lives. More often than not the counselee is not aware of this guidance, but what about the chaplain? If we believe that a continuous flow of God’s grace is forming each believer, then we can be sure that “he will be faithful to complete it” (Phil 1:6).

No one was better at showing this in his interactions with people on the racetrack, on a day-to-day basis, than Norman Evans. The author of *Muddy Shoes* introduced the formal practice of racetrack chaplaincy in Ohio in 1976. He had been a farmer for twenty

¹⁵ Charles Allen Kollar, *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling: An Effective Short-Term Approach for Getting People Back on Track* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 33.

¹⁶ Kollar, *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling*, 37.

¹⁷ Kollar, *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling*, 53.

¹⁸ Kollar, *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling*, 56.

years when he had the call to ministry, and he took the time to properly prepare. He went to college at Cornell and then studied in seminary at Eastern Baptist. He was a pastor for about ten years before receiving a call to be a racetrack chaplain/missionary with the American Baptist churches to the racetracks in Ohio.

A great example of Evans's heart to bring the grace of God to the people on the racetrack and perhaps the greatest blessing that he was to me as well is in regard to some of his Scripture "adaptations." Every one of the twenty-five short chapters of this book begins with a passage of Scripture, and it is amazing to see the relevance of the passage as the chapter continues.

There is one in particular that I have to share. It is, "We all like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Is 53:6). Evans's admittedly loose translation for horsemen is, "We're all like loose horses!"¹⁹

You see, a loose horse on a racetrack and backstretch is a dangerous thing, for the horse and the people. At the racetrack, if you hear, "Loose horse!" you know to stand sideways as close to a building as you can, and wait for someone on a horse to recover the loose horse. Evans in his inspired way has preached a most relevant and reasonable sermon on Is 53:6 from the perspective of a loose horse. This is a powerful example of a showing forth of love.

It encouraged me to preach a sermon from Luke 18:35–19:10 that I had never imagined before. As I read this passage for the first time after becoming a racetrack chaplain, I couldn't help but see the blind man at the gate of Jericho like the people who

¹⁹ Norman Evans, *Muddy Shoes: A Ministry in the Mud and Dirt of the Horse Tracks* (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2004), 153.

are at the stable gate (the back gate) of the track looking for work and a place to stay. I further saw Zacchaeus, who is outside another side of Jericho (Jesus has passed through at this point), to be at the main gate (the gate where the executives would enter the track property), and I couldn't help thinking how they both needed Jesus. This is a sermon that I have preached several times based on honest exegesis, and it has touched many. This leads us to our third focus for the chaplain—showing forth truth.

Evidencing the Truth in Action

The chaplain will be pulled in many directions and called upon to answer many questions and concerns. In considering how to act and respond in the face of these forces, it will be best to stay solidly grounded in Scripture the greatest source of truth.

Celebrating the Jewish and Christian holidays has been helpful to me in this regard. These traditions and events also help me to determine the worship services throughout the year. This helps me decide what to write about in my columns. They help me to write prayers at banquets and select Scripture for the daily devotionals that I publish year after year. “The more we sing and tell the old, old story the less we shall be satisfied with psychological and spiritual junk food, with false and temporary of embodiment. . . . There is an overall theme played in the heart of God. We have to listen to that tune and share in the larger drama if we are to make sense of our own.”²⁰

It is continually both encouraging and somewhat surprising to have people who have regularly attended church for decades say to me after the annual celebration of a most significant biblical event that they never heard anyone speak on the meaning of the

²⁰ Alan Jones, *Passion for Pilgrimage: Notes for the Journey Home: Meditations on the Easter Mystery* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1989), 20.

holy day. Some, to be sure, simply do not remember. I also know that some are speaking completely truthfully. It was only a couple of years ago that I was listening to Alistair Begg confess as he was speaking at the time of the year of the ascension celebration that he had never spoken on this before.

It seems to me that I have never run out of new things to say in the “new year” celebration of a holy day, and it seems that it is important to repeat freely many things year after year. The racetrack community far from home is especially blessed with celebrations that remind them of past celebrations back home, and/or bring new meaning and rhythm to their lives today, and the life of the chaplain as well. *Repetitio est mater studiorum* (Repetition is the mother of learning) is a worthwhile saying. The first several years I was leading worship I fastidiously did not repeat anything. I wrongly thought that repetition bordered on being sluggardly. I have since relearned the Latin phrase of my youth and its importance in our spiritual life, just as in other arenas.

Historically and presently some of the most conservative of the faithful do not celebrate the holy days. I have seen this over the past decade as I visit a different church and sometimes more than one church each week in promoting the racetrack chaplaincy. I think this is a misplaced and misguided sense of faithfulness.

Eugene Peterson writes, “The five annual acts of worship (four festivals and a fast) has seemed to me to be a singular stroke of pastoral imagination.”²¹ I have also found that as a chaplain who often is leading the worship of both Jews and Christians at the same time, celebrating the holy days of the Old Testament allows us to worship with an amazing unity and to matter of factly bear witness to what Christians additionally celebrate regarding the holy day.

²¹ Eugene Peterson, *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 15.

It is important to show forth truth in a winsome manner. The stridency of the new atheists should not cause us to react in kind. Periods of skepticism do not last; people cannot live on skepticism.²² Given we speak the truth, we can know that we speak from a position of strength, and we need not stoop to their level of rhetoric. “One word of truth shall outweigh the whole world.”²³

“Put differently . . . Christian persuasion is a matter of cross talk, not of clever talk.”²⁴ Ultimately our aim is to lead people to a life of faith, not simply to “close the deal.” We must always address the mind, but we are also speaking to the heart, the passions, and the emotions, for we are seeking to persuade people spiritually and morally, and not simply intellectually. Bear witness to the truth. “God is his own best apologist. At our best we are humble junior counsels for the defense, and no more.”²⁵

²² Os Guinness said this to me more than once when I studied under him at the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics, Queens College, Oxford University. He would go on to give examples throughout the millennia.

²³ Alexander Solzhenitsyn said this in his acceptance lecture for the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1970.

²⁴ OS Guinness, *Fool’s Talk: Recovering the Art of Christian Persuasion* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 39.

²⁵ Guinness, *Fool’s Talk*, 51.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROJECT DESIGN

Introduction

After becoming a racetrack chaplain, my sense of vocation was repeatedly confirmed most clearly by the sense of satisfaction I had from seeing that real needs were being met and the ministry was growing under my leadership. There was great difficulty due mainly to the far less fellowship with other believers than I had as a pastor. There were far greater spans of time between interacting with other mature Christians and Christian leaders, and even more time between interactions with other pastors. It was important for me to become quickly involved with a local church. It was necessary for me to ask to join a local ministerium. I also invited a couple of pastors to meet in my office weekly for prayer and fellowship.

I invited some of the local pastors to join a local chaplaincy council which I also found necessary to start and considered it the elders of the chaplaincy, just as a church would have a board of this type. There were already horsemen and executives from the management of the track who were advising me, but I felt that it was wise to have the church involved in this way. These were practical things that I needed.

While the above was proceeding but by no means completed, I attended my first annual meeting of the Race Track Chaplains of America. I found this to be very helpful as I learned much about the industry that I had only begun to know a little about and would not have learned for years without these few days of intensive training. I was not a chaplain who had come to be a racetrack chaplain after years of being on a racetrack. I

also greatly enjoyed the companionship of the other chaplains, with whom I now had so much in common. The training at the meeting was not new to them, and it did not seem to me to meet their needs. Most of them had come from long backgrounds in the racing industry. They knew more than enough about horse racing to interact with the wide variety of workers, professionals, and executives on the racetrack with regard to chit-chat about the horses and business—but regarding that which a chaplain should be prepared to discuss proactively and reactively, I was not so sure.

There was a speaker one afternoon who was a psychiatrist. I took copious notes. I considered his sharing to be very practical. He was helpful to me, informative, and extremely interesting. I had dinner with him that evening. His words that afternoon and evening have significantly affected the development of the counseling and 12-step program that I practice and oversee at my track. Yet the feedback forms from the chaplains conveyed their lack of interest and lack of awareness of the validity and cogence of his advice.

Only upon later reflection did I have the concerns regarding the preparedness of the chaplains to do their work that I believe most of them are truly called to perform. What I was first rather overwhelmed by was the fervor for the ministry that these chaplains clearly expressed. It may have been because they were in the presence of other chaplains and excited for this one-time-a-year (or less if one were missed—and many were) opportunity for the fellowship of co-laborers who were otherwise so many miles apart.

Again, it was my first time gathering with this group. They asked me few questions. It seemed they took me to be either as a neophyte, or a heathen academic, or

some combination of both. However, late on the last night of the chaplain school (the next day would be the annual meeting and banquet), at a gathering of just chaplains, they anointed me with oil, laid hands on me, and prayed for me.

I had received the highest order of ordination by my denomination more than twenty years earlier. I had been commissioned as a missionary when I went to the track by my denomination. I had never been anointed with oil. It touched me and moved me deeply. I felt a great kinship and love for these other racetrack chaplains.

The Chaplain School and Annual Meeting Enhancements

There was a mature Christian horseman who was elected the president that year, and a few months after that meeting he would call on me to revive the Education and Development Committee of the Racetrack Chaplains of America as the chairman of that committee. It is a position I hold still and passionately work to use to help the chaplains in their personal and professional development. When asked to accept this position I had already developed a great love for these chaplains and was most happy to help in any way that I could. I shared with him thoughts that were already sprouting in my heart after talking with the chaplains at the annual meeting. My observations at the annual meeting had given me concerns about a woeful lack of spiritual, theological, and leadership training necessary to be a chaplain and to lead a chaplaincy.

The first assignment for the Education and Development Committee was to plan for the next Chaplain School and Annual Meeting. I felt that an important part of that was to enlist other chaplains to be members of the committee. If nothing else, they could share their feelings and opinions with me. The three I was able to have a few conference

calls with were not interested in doing the work of scheduling speakers, locations, and all that goes with planning a conference, but their feedback was invaluable in knowing how to approach the new format, subjects, and focus for this next chaplain school and others beyond.

They helped me to know what they were faced with on daily, weekly, monthly, and seasonal bases; what their greatest challenges were, as well as their strengths and weaknesses. In fact, I communicated with all the chaplains via email, sharing with them what discussions and planning had taken place and inviting any input and ideas from any of the chaplains. I also sent out surveys asking what each chaplain considered to be his weaknesses, strengths, challenges, and successes.

One survey that was used was *Strengths Finder 2.0* from the book by Tom Rath of the same title.¹ Below is the first of several emails I sent to chaplains attempting to get their input and participation:

You will be receiving a book in the mail next week entitled *Strengths Finder 2.0*. Turn to the back of the book, find and open a brown envelope. Inside the envelope is an access code to use with an online assessment called Strengths Finder. Take the 20 minutes to answer a series of questions that will reveal your top 5 strengths as determined by answers you give to the questions. When you are finished email to me your top 5 strengths.

We were starting to build a data base beginning with personnel files on each chaplain. Learning the educational status was the beginning; next was starting to develop an objective picture of what were each chaplain's strengths and thus an objective set of goals.

In addition to the committee meetings there were invitations to all chaplains for conference calls, webinars, and online university courses. I was blessed with some

¹ Tom Rath, *Strengths Finder 2.0* (New York, NY: Gallup Press, 2007).

technical volunteers who enabled me to make this a reality. These allowed for preparation of hearts for the first chaplain school that was focused on a subject specific to chaplains. I arranged for Michael Todd Wilson to come to our chaplain school and share his seven foundation stones from the book he co-authored with Brad Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure*. The book was sent to all chaplains prior to the school, and for the entire chaplain school we focused on this one relevant subject.

We also have made the chaplain school completely free to chaplains. Other than their transportation, the school, meals, and lodging are free. This is a powerful sign of the support and emphasis that is placed on the chaplain's education and development. There is also assistance available for transportation to those who find that to be prohibitive.

There were sessions when the chaplains were in small groups, and others when all the chaplains were together in one group. Some of these were brainstorming meetings. Others were centered on taking questions, getting feedback, and discussing the chaplain school workshops. Still others were for planning for future chaplain schools and chaplain programs.

Racetrack Visits

I also was inwardly compelled to actively visit chaplains at their racetracks. I say actively because the visits were not my stopping by to go out to lunch with the chaplain, although it usually included the sharing of a meal or meals. They were times when I would spend at least one full day shadowing the chaplain. There were times during each visit when I would be able to speak with many people as a group, and individually, while the chaplain was doing something (typically speaking to someone privately). All of these

visits were times of active listening, questioning, collecting papers and phone numbers, emails, taking photos, and even rebate information. There were times to help as well. One chaplain said after I had spent two days with him, “I thought you wanted me to give you a tour of the sights of the city. I didn’t know you were actually going to help me out.” I let him know what a blessing it was to me for him to share his ministry with me.

This was a joy for me because of the fellowship and being able to see other tracks. It also allowed me to see how chaplains were received by their constituents, how they conducted day-to-day activities (I generally wasn’t going when there were special events), what they did, and when they did “it.” For instance, some would insist that there was a certain time of day that one needed to get to the track and walk the barns, and yet others would think that to do such a thing at that time made no sense at all, because as some put it, the chaplain would just be in the way. This may seem nonsense, but it was a beginning of leading me and them into thinking about their work as we began to share how others worked. It was at least the beginning of an interest or an invitation to reflect on the best practices approach in a one on one during my visits and in larger settings after multiple visits during times of sharing.

As a result of the blessing of the fellowship from the visits and the friendships that developed as a result of the time spent together, I suggested that every chaplain begin to practice what I called the buddy system. This is similar to having an accountability partner, which I hoped and communicated should be in addition to this buddy system. The buddy system would be cultivating a friendship with one or more racetrack chaplains. The time together at an arm’s-length distance might be limited to the annual chaplain school, but in between there would be recognition of life events (birthday,

anniversary, special event(s) at the chaplain's track, holidays). Emails could be part of the communications, but there would also be once a month a phone conversation with one's buddy or buddies. Some intention was made to have new chaplains connected with a chaplain who had several years of experience.

I traveled to twelve tracks across the country over the past five years. At every track, in addition to meeting with the chaplain (except at one track, although I spoke with him later at length), there were dozens of other people I actively listened to, questioned, and have followed up with after the visits.

I took pictures, drew schematics, and wrote narratives of interviews and interactions. This helped me to have ideas of how I could create a chapel space, for instance, at my racetrack. It also helped me to be able to show the people at my track so that they could see that it was not uniquely peculiar. Some workers at my track had been at other tracks and were happy to see my communicating what I had seen that would have been impossible for them to articulate. It also, I am sure, showed that I was passionate about making the chaplaincy at my track better and better.

These visits made me a better chaplain. I learned so much that I have employed, and it led me to want to write a handbook for chaplaincies to share with others what I had learned. It also helped me formulate my thoughts and ideas and to improve the chances of implementing improvements at my track.

Chaplaincy Handbook

I call it this document a handbook for chaplaincies because it is not just for the chaplain but also for the team of people who are around the chaplain. The chaplain, even

if there were several chaplains of a track, probably would not have the skill set to conduct all of the tasks required, and if they did, it would be far better for them to focus on a smaller set of tasks and grow in excellence in a few of them.

The chaplaincy handbook is also an appendix to this work, and so it is redundant to go into detail. It especially grew out of the time spent with chaplains and the workers at the tracks that I visited, as well as the experiences of my eight years as a chaplain at a racetrack. It would have been different even if it were being published only a year ago.

As the organization ages and the founding chaplains have died or are becoming unable to be involved, it was important to provide for current and new chaplains advice and best practices information that was discovered during the nearly half century of the Race Track Chaplaincy of America. The handbook begins by speaking of the history of the chaplain. It discusses the legal bases, biblical basis, and general differences from the pastorate, parish, and congregational setting.

The handbook continues by delving into the specific distinctives of racetrack chaplaincy that even a veteran chaplain would not know. There is guidance regarding daily, weekly, and seasonal tasks for the chaplain in a racetrack setting. Giving an overview of the racetrack constituencies in the handbook then helps the chaplain know the responsibilities and pressures of the individual people he will interact with.

Another section focuses on the work of the chaplain in the larger community, and the person of the chaplain. There are subsections on accountability, self-care, taking time for education, adding certifications, and reporting to the chaplain's council and track management. Communicating and reporting what the chaplain has done lets others know what they are getting. It also helps the chaplain see what he or she has accomplished, and

that he or she has accomplished a lot. This is important in an environment where there is so much need and it can seem like one has not accomplished much.

There are also some forms and general guidance to assist the chaplain and the chaplaincy council with record keeping. There is assistance with doing things in keeping with general accepted accounting practices.

The handbook will be sent out to ten to twenty chaplains initially. The chaplains who receive the handbook will be both new and experienced. The experienced chaplains' feedback will be important because they can say if it seems truthful and practical given their experience. The new chaplains' feedback will be important for similar reasons, and after their first and second years they can tell us whether the handbook helped them from mistakes they would have made. I look forward to sharing more of their feedback and future plans in chapter 5 of this thesis-project.

It is important to note that I cannot underestimate the value of my lifetime of experience as a pastor, a licensed healthcare administrator, faith-based school teacher and headmaster, Army officer, as well as my work on boards and especially my time as treasurer of the board of the Baptist Homes. While I served the Baptist Homes as treasurer for several years, we established a foundation. The purpose of the foundation was solely to support the residents and properties of the Baptist Homes. It also was a means of protecting assets if any given home or all the homes were sued. It created what lawyers referred to as a legal veil.

I took this experience with me to the Race Track Chaplaincy of America, and we began a multi-year task of incorporating each chaplaincy and requiring each chaplaincy to become a separate entity, namely, a separate 501(c)(3) non-profit, charitable

organizations. This is something that we assisted each chaplaincy in doing, and we set a five-year deadline for it to be done. After that deadline the national organization would no longer actively participate in filing forms for or accounting for monies on the national filings for the recording of income and property.

Most chaplains did not have professional insurance, and most chaplaincies that had councils of some form did not have insurance for directors and officers. Even if they individually did, the Race Track Chaplaincy of America was taking on a huge, unnecessary liability because they had given their endorsement to dozens of chaplains around the country.

We also began to create and keep personnel files on each chaplain. The most important part was doing a thorough background check. This was an expensive endeavor that was met with resistance, but insurance agents helped explain the invaluable importance of the effort and expense.

One could write a novel or two telling the stories from the work listed in the events of this project design section. I will share some of those stories in chapter 5 on the project outcomes.

CHAPTER FIVE

PROJECT OUTCOMES

This thesis-project to assess the needs of racetrack chaplains and to develop an education and development program to meet their needs has been an ongoing work for more than six years, and it still continues. An edition of the handbook is completed and is an appendix of this thesis-project.

I began working as a chaplain at the racetrack at the end of 2009 and was asked by the president of the Race Track Chaplaincy of America board to chair the Education and Development Committee early in 2011. During that time I have worked under three board presidents and three executive directors.

Personnel Policy Changes

The personnel changes promulgated some significant changes in the emphases in the education and development of our chaplains and our chaplaincies. It took at least three years of discussion before they were voted on and made part of our rules in 2014. There were, however, definite lapses in commitment to and application of these emphases.

There are three basic emphases of the Race Track Chaplaincy of America for our chaplains. This of course will necessarily be a continuing process. There are additionally a number of obstacles to carrying them out: namely, the commitment of all those hiring and supervising the chaplains, and the cooperation of the chaplains (for instance, to do a

background check the chaplain has to give his or her signed permission) is an ongoing necessity.

The first emphasis is to have personnel records that serve as both a starting point and tracking device of the chaplains' training and experience. They would then include personalized plans for education, professional development, and a schedule for review and supervision as needed.

Second is a thorough background check before endorsement for future chaplains and for current chaplains. This would become an important part of the personnel record. The background check for current chaplains is incomplete; even some new chaplains continue to be hired without completing a background check. This is not just a qualitative matter. It is of great importance for the chaplaincy should a chaplain become accused of misconduct. If the chaplaincy has not done the necessary due diligence prior to endorsing or hiring the chaplain, the chaplaincy has additional liabilities.

Third is an accountability plan. I often refer to this as the buddy system and find this phrase to be a helpful introductory explanation of its importance and relevance. This is also incomplete in its execution and practice. It is, however, simply calling on chaplains to interact with at least one other chaplain at least once a week. There can be a mix of means of interacting. Some weeks it will be only an email, but the chaplains who are linked should be close enough to one another to be able to meet face to face at least twice a year.

The chaplain can suggest who his or her buddy will be, or a buddy may be assigned. If the chaplain is new and inexperienced, he or she will be assigned a chaplain who is experienced and has shown himself or herself to be an expert.

It is encouraged that a chaplain will have more than one buddy or accountability partner. This is important for several reasons. Chaplains may become sick or be unable for a period of time to fulfill their accountability responsibility.

An expert chaplain will have more than one partner because he or she will have a less experienced chaplain(s) to whom he or she is assigned, as well as another chaplain who is at more of the same level of experience. The expert chaplain does find that the new chaplains are very often a great source of fellowship and reflection for a variety of reasons. One reason often shared is that in teaching the new chaplain and answering his or her questions the experienced chaplains reflects on and recalls experiences more deeply. I have repeatedly experienced this and find it worth whatever time and energy it takes.

That is what should be standard practice for the past few years. However, there is a new chaplain who trained with me at the track where I serve as the chaplain. He was not a chaplain or even a chaplain candidate at the time he worked with me. He has a master's degree in counseling, is a mature Christian, led a Bible study, and assisted me in chapel services and a few other things.

He is also a former jockey and has some horses of his own, and in the fall of 2016 he moved near a track a few hours away. In the late spring of 2017, I was contacted by the national office and was told I had been given as a reference for him. He was going to be the chaplain at the track near where he now lived. I thought that this was acceptable given he was assigned close supervision for at least the first year, and I inquired about the makeup of the local board (the expertises and length of service of the members). I contacted him and started to keep in close contact with him. Professionally, he was all on

his own. He had never performed a funeral or other ministerial services; he had no resources, no pastoral handbooks for services, and no commentaries.

If I had not taken it upon myself to visit him, to share and gift him resources, I do not know what would have happened. The times I had spoken to him prior to visiting he expressed such appreciation for the calls—listening, advising—but also dismay. When I visited him and stayed with him for a couple of days about two months after he started, he confessed being depressed and overwhelmed. He thought that he would have to be a tour guide for me and that I was only visiting to see the area; but he was profoundly blessed by the presence of another fellow practitioner to talk to and work with for a day or two.

I have visited fifteen tracks over the past several years to visit chaplains and to work on this project, and I have spoken with many others. It is common to hear of the chaplain being left unsupervised and alone, without any visits or calls like the ones I had made to my fellow chaplain that I described above. This sort of relationship between chaplains is supposed to be common practice. We had declared that it would be the case. It is not yet being widely, deliberately, and consistently practiced. That still remains a goal that I pursue and continue to keep at the forefront of our agenda.

It takes consistent and proactive effort on the part of chaplains to have quality accountability partners. Over the twenty-nine years since my ordination I have had several great people who have been this for me, but for several reasons they have changed. Retirements or job changes that bring far-away moves will change the makeup of a small group, as well as partnerships that are one on one. These are just a few reasons why it is necessary to continually cultivate new friendships. As a minister grows in

experience, he or she should be looking to help those who are less experienced in this way, and that will bring change in those with whom one partners. This is largely the responsibility of individual chaplains and hard to enforce comprehensively, but its importance is repeatedly reinforced. There is also a brief annual report that each chaplain is expected to return and a place to answer a few questions regarding their accountability practices. We have had about 50 percent participation in this reporting and about 30 percent completion of the section on accountability.

Regional and National Meetings

Another major development was regarding the annual national meeting. We now call it the Chaplain School and Annual Meeting (CSAM). The CSAM for the past five years has been focused on one or two educational topics that are determined to be helpful to a chaplain and determined to be needful to our chaplain cohort. It is not, as it had largely been, only a time when industry luminaries would speak.

Our CSAM three-to-four-day schedule now is 90 percent filled with teaching from seminary professors. Two or three books that are recommended by the professors are sent to the chaplains several months before the CSAM. Outlines, questions, and some articles from the professors are also emailed leading up to the CSAM.

We also have three or four conference calls to discuss how the reading is resonating with the chaplains. This feedback is shared with the professors and enhances the emailed packets leading up to the CSAM. We also have at least one conference call about two weeks after the CSAM with similar actions and reactions.

The CSAM registration has been completely free for the chaplain for five years, and we plan to continue this practice. This covers lodging as well as all snacks and meals. It is also publicized that travel cost assistance can be requested.

The attendance at the CSAMs has not increased, but there have been some changes in those who attend. There have been very high ratings of the quality and helpfulness by those who attend.

The Race Track Chaplaincy of America is made up of nine regions. It has been requested since 2012 that each region have a one-day (or more) meeting/conference at least once a year. The structure of these events is not regulated by the Education and Development Committee. It is an additional opportunity for fellowship and for friendships to begin and/or grow. It is expected to be held close to one of the tracks in the region so another track can be visited or revisited by those attending.

The time spent touring another track and the observations that take place are valuable. From the time one drives up to the gate, the perspective of the practices at another track begin to be made and the spectrum of experience begins to expand from which the chaplain can draw upon and take back to his or her track.

We have made educational webinars available to our chaplains for about two years. Some of these allow for them to receive college credits. The cost, which has been negotiated to be very modest, is covered by the national office. To date only two chaplains have used this service for two courses. This is a modest advance with regard to participation, but I am pleased that we are able to offer this to our chaplains.

Results of a General Survey of the Chaplains

The survey was to give us basic, objective facts about our current cohort of chaplains. It asked about the level of education. Did they have other current vocational endeavors? How much of their time was spent in the chaplain ministry? Did they do other things because it was financially necessary and/or the track was open only seasonally? What benefits did they receive and/or need? These answers would help us better address the needs of our chaplains in writing grants to explain the current situation of our chaplains or when speaking to donors to better share our needs.

The survey of the chaplains took place during 2016 and early 2017. I developed the survey in 2015 as part of my work for this thesis-project. It was done with the approval of Dr. Bryan Auday, the chairman of the psychology department at Gordon College, so I felt confident about the instrument and looked forward to sending it to all of the chaplains. I developed a Survey Monkey survey that would easily compile the answers but was at the last minute told by the executive director that the president of the national board forbid me to send it to the chaplains.

I called the president to discuss his concerns. He was not specific regarding his objection(s), except regarding one question. I said that I could change or even remove that particular question but was still told that he did not want me to send the survey to the chaplains. He did not want the national office to be somehow connected to or blamed for the offenses that he claimed the survey would cause if it was just emailed to the chaplains. He additionally said these issues and questions should be addressed in informal personal conversations.

I thought about this for a few days and called him back. I told him that I was sorry that he felt this way and that I would not send out the survey in a mass email. I would, however, make changes to the survey to address his concerns and personally give a paper copy to as many chaplains as I could. It seemed important to do this to further our study in service to our chaplains. It would be more work, but it seemed an obedient compromise.

Every chaplain I saw over the following year in a variety of venues, but always face to face, happily accepted the survey, filled it out, and returned it, with one exception. The president refused even to look at the revised survey when I saw him at the next CSAM.

Interestingly, the number of returned surveys far exceeded any type of questionnaires that Race Track Chaplaincy of America had ever sent by mail or email in the past. The personal presentation of the survey, which would never have been done without this compromise, perhaps is the very reason for the record response.

We received surveys from about 50 percent of all our chaplains. The survey showed a strong commitment on the part of our chaplains. Fifty percent have second jobs. The average chaplain spends 73 percent of his time in the work of a chaplain but receives only 58 percent of his income from his work as a chaplain. The benefits that the average chaplain receives are almost zero.

The education level of those I was able to survey in 2016 and 2017 is higher than I expected based on conversations that took place over the past eight years. In fact, I have to declare that I think this sample gave results with higher education levels than if I had been able to survey 100 percent of our chaplains. That being said, I still think that the

education levels of the group surveyed are not satisfactory, and even more concerning is the number of chaplains who listed no or very few educational future goals.

Of the chaplains who responded, 44 four percent had a bachelor's degree. Fewer than half of these did not have a bachelor's degree that in some way related to the work of a chaplain. Those who did have a relevant bachelor's degree had a Master of Divinity degree as well (22 percent). Among the respondents, 44 percent did not have any college degree; 22 percent reported having some college courses, and this group's classes were somewhat related to the work of the chaplain.

Of the respondents, 56 six percent said they had no educational goals, and more than half of these were those who did not yet have a degree. Of those who did not have a degree, 33 percent expressed interest in further education that was directly related to the work of the chaplain. Also, 11 percent of the respondents expressed a desire to learn Spanish, which is helpful in relating to a large percentage of the population of most of the racetracks in North America (approximately 25 percent of our chaplains speak fluent or near-fluent Spanish). My greater concern than the lack of education is the lack of commitment to professional development and a sense of the need and value of higher education.

For instance, upon finishing this thesis-project I will begin to work to become certified as a drug and alcohol counselor because it will be a service to the management and personnel of the track. I will probably be a better counselor and it will hopefully improve my style and approach to counseling, but it will also allow the chaplaincy to provide an additional service to the track in meeting state and national requirements. Many tracks have decided to hire social workers and counselors instead of chaplains over

the past decade in part because of legal requirements, but a chaplain with even just a bachelor's degree can get meet the legal requirements if he or she is willing to test for certain certifications.

The track is an environment that is virtually completely closed to the church without a chaplain. If the chaplain does not meet a certain level of value to track management, they do not have the chance to start or to stay.

Chaplaincy Board or Council Programs

Each chaplain is instructed to form a chaplaincy board or council if there is not already one at the track where he or she is ministering. The chaplaincy council will be similar to a board of elders in a church and will be of invaluable support to the chaplain and the ministry at the track.

The chaplaincy council has an important role to play in all the points mentioned above. They often will hire the chaplain, and their commitment to the personnel emphases is critical to our having competent chaplains. Their oversight of their chaplain is often a necessary incentive for the chaplain furthering his or her education, attending the CSAMs, participating in conference calls, and participating in the accountability program.

Every effort should be made to invite and enlist some local clergy to join the chaplaincy board. Chaplains are encouraged to join and to be active in a local church as well as local ministerial. This will be a great source of members to the councils.

If the local council is a separate legal entity, it can be a legal veil from liability of the national association and the other chaplaincies. In the past this was not the case, and

the national organization was including almost all councils on their IRS 990 tax form.

Almost all of the current councils have become separate 501(c)3, non-profit charitable organizations. A necessary part of achieving this status is having a constitution and/or bylaws. If any of our councils do not have this status by the end of 2019, the national organizations will not continue to endorse their chaplain.

This non-profit status is important in receiving support. Even management may qualify to have a partial tax deduction for some of their contributions to the chaplaincy, but certainly individuals and local businesses do.

The non-profit status is even an important part of being insurable. The national organization is just beginning to verify that each council has proper insurance coverage. Some property insurance is often reasonable, although much more modest than a church because the chaplaincy is usually and almost completely using the racetrack property. The coverages that are needed are for directors and officers, workers compensation, and professional insurance for the chaplain.

The Project in Review

It has been nearly nine years since I was called to be a chaplain at a racetrack. Doing that work was not something that I had ever expected or planned. Shortly after starting a crash course in the work of a racetrack chaplain I was called into another endeavor I also neither expected nor planned—leading the education and development program for the national organization of racetrack chaplains. While feeling overwhelmed, I was willing because I quickly came to care deeply about the ministry and the chaplains and had ideas about how to improve the operations.

The chaplains have come from almost as diverse a background as the number and breadth of backgrounds of the people who make up the racetrack communities. All the chaplains shared a calling to minister in this unique setting, and it is amazing to see how God has prepared them and placed them to at least begin this great service. I knew that I would have been greatly helped by a handbook that would have been at least an organizational chart of the racetrack operations.

Chaplains who had come to the chaplaincy work from a long history of working at the racetrack would not have as much need for this information. Even those chaplains who were steeped in the operations and offices of a racetrack could use a racetrack chaplaincy handbook for guidance in relating to churches, conducting oneself as a chaplain at the track, and setting up and operating the chaplaincy as, in essence, its executive director.

The goal for a handbook for racetrack chaplains was and continues to be to address the incoming and ongoing needs of chaplains coming from a broad spectrum of backgrounds. The handbook in the appendix is the result of several brainstorming meetings where I took copious notes. I wrote a draft and sent it around to all the chaplains for whom I had contact information, asking them to read and give feedback. I gratefully received feedback from several and incorporated the feedback into a second draft.

This second draft was then sent out to even more recipients, partly because the handbook came to be seen as an instrument that could be useful to chaplaincy boards. This broader audience for the handbook grew out of the other work we were doing regarding personnel, risk management, and organization that was elaborated on earlier.

So the handbook in the appendix is at least the third draft. It is not the last, for I hope to continue to improve the work and adapt it to changes that will certainly come in the years ahead. We have done our best to keep the handbook as short as possible in hopes that one would be willing to start to read it and would read it completely.

I know that the honing of this instrument will continue because there will be at least one hour-long session in the next two Chaplain Schools and Annual Meetings set aside specifically to review the handbook. It is our hope that these sessions, along with this instrument, will help the chaplains to focus with increasingly clarity and passion for development on the important and challenging work of the racetrack chaplain for many years.

Racetracks are communities with greater socioeconomic and cultural breadth than anywhere I have ever ministered. I cannot imagine a more diverse place of ministry. There are people from all over the world. People groups where we cannot officially send missionaries are coming to us. The church does not want to miss this valuable strategic opportunity to be present at this international nexus. Because of these new emphases and accomplishment of the Race Track Chaplaincy of America, as a result of this thesis-project, we are far more assured of having a permanent and prominent position at this global venue.

APPENDIX A

RACETRACK CHAPLAINCY HANDBOOK

Introduction

This handbook comes out of surveys of racetrack chaplains that have years of successful experience. It is our hope that this handbook will be helpful for the chaplain; however, we believe it will also be useful for the members of local chaplaincy councils both in caring for the chaplain and in assisting in conducting the business of the chaplaincy. The chaplaincy is in a position to evaluate regularly the chaplain in regards, for instance, to providing a salary increase, and board members may use some of the information in this handbook to determine whether the chaplain is doing what a chaplain can to meet the needs of the racetrack community. Also, this handbook can help the chaplaincy see whether they are providing for the needs of the chaplain and properly conducting chaplaincy business.

Several forms are included in this handbook that readers are free to use. Even those who have been racetrack chaplains for many years and have been blessed with council members who have been associated with the racetrack chaplaincy for even longer many find this helpful. You may be just starting as a racetrack chaplain and working to form your council, so we hope this handbook will be helpful.

Some have been hospital chaplains, nursing home chaplains, and pastors for decades before coming to the racetrack. Some as pastors of churches who provided food for and hosted many Chapel n' Chows. There was so much still to be learned when they came to minister in the racetrack setting as the chaplain at the track.

For those who have been racetrack chaplains for decades, reading this handbook may be an exercise or means of reflecting on the blessed calling of working on the backstretch as a chaplain. We thank all the racetrack chaplains who have allowed us to visit their tracks and see their ministries. Thank you for your patience and interest. To the many others who have shared at annual chaplain schools or in meetings, phone calls, and emails, thank you for helping us to step back and reflect on this work far better than any one person could have without the increased perspective and wider view of this ministry that our collective thinking allowed.

Chaplaincy Foundations

Historical and Legal Bases

There have been chaplains long before they were given the rich title of chaplain, which comes from a story of Saint Martin of Tours in the fourth century AD. As the story goes, Martin saw a barely clothed poor man one day. Martin was compelled to cut half of his cloak and give half to this poor man. Later, it was reported that the cloak of Martin grew back to its full size, and even later Martin became a conscientious objector but stayed with the troops and led them in battle. The Latin for cloak is *cappella*, and priests who accompanied troops in campaigns and battles were called *cappellan* or *cappellani*. This is the origin of the English word *chaplain*.

Chaplains today are found in almost every type of setting, and the number and places are growing. Do a search for chaplain jobs, and there are private corporations, airports, prisons, hospitals, police departments, and many other organizations that have or are hoping to have a chaplain.

It has been long considered that Melchizedek, the priest of Salem, as doing the work of the chaplain in the story of Abraham and his fighting men. Indeed chaplains are often part-time chaplains who also serve a parish or hold another, secular job.

In the United States there is a history of our legislative bodies allowing for chaplains from our founding. The work of the chaplain has become more complicated with the increasing multicultural dimension of our country and communities. Chaplains are called and required to be sensitive to the fact that many people they minister to are of a faith other than that held by the chaplain, and yet the chaplain is called to minister in an especially diplomatic and tactful manner to all without prejudice or persuasive proselytizing.

Biblical Basis and General Differences from the Pastorate and Congregational Setting to the Chaplaincy Setting

There are many instances of chaplains in many settings who are not ordained clergy. This, it seems, is dependent upon the standards of those who hired the chaplain. It seems that this would be a major difference between the parish and the chaplaincy, but it is not the most significant difference.

The most fundamental difference between the parish and the chaplaincy is that the chaplain ministers to a closed community. The level of closedness will vary and sometimes be mostly unnoticeable. The prison chaplain serves in a much more closed setting than the hospital chaplain, but the hospital chaplain has much greater entrée throughout the local hospital than the pastor serving in a church in the same community. Those who have been a hospital chaplain know that they could enter operating rooms, for

instance, and if they were a local pastor they would not even be able to look into through a window.

The racetrack chaplain is licensed by the racing commission, and without that license the chaplain cannot enter the backstretch. Without that license no one can go anywhere other than the general public areas. Upwards of 90 percent of the racetrack chaplain's ministry is conducted behind gated and/or locked areas guarded by security.

The God of the Bible called his people to be a blessing to "all peoples on earth" (Gen 12:3). The Lord Jesus called upon his disciples to go into all the world (Matt 28:19). The racetrack certainly falls into these categories. The denomination that ordained me and whose ordination I continue to hold has additionally designated me as a special interest missionary due to the ministry at the track. And yet, because this work is done at a privately owned racetrack, regulated by the state, I must conduct myself differently than a missionary sent out to work freely in the public arena.

The racetrack is, however, a most strategic place to bear witness to the Light of the world. There are people from all socioeconomic levels. There are people from literally dozens of countries on any given day. It is an international crossroads, and some of the people are from countries where freedom of religion is an offense punishable by death. Many have never had an opportunity to see a Bible. This is a great opportunity to not lose sight of that which many pastors can only wish they could experience in their churches.

Chaplains are also not to think of themselves as church planters. The racetrack chaplain is not trying to start a church because most if not all racetracks are not in unchurched areas. It is almost impossible for backstretch workers to get to those

churches, and that is why we hold worship services and minister to them in the other ways that we do, but no part of our work is leading to a church building campaign, for instance. The hope and goal is that our racetrackers will as a result of the outreach of the chaplain, come to attend established Christian fellowships or start them on their own.

Racetrack Chaplaincy Distinctives

History

Having said that chaplains must conduct themselves differently than pastors in parishes, I happily hasten to state that the bylaws of the Race Track Chaplaincy of America's (RTCA) complete purpose statement is that "The Race Track Chaplaincy of America, Inc. is to bring God's grace and salvation to the people of the horse racing industry so that they may accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and become his disciples."

This continues to be the passion and purpose of our chaplains and the vast majority of our supporters. What a passion our founder, Salty Roberts, had for bringing people to the Lord Jesus. Anyone who spent time with Salty knows of the little booklets that he handed out and had his pockets filled with. They can be found at www.littlebibleministry.com, calling 800-724-0724, or mailing Little Bible Ministry, PO Box 2001, Pottstown, PA 19464. The same booklets or similar ones should be in your office and pockets.

Salty would be the first to say that he did not start bringing chaplains on the racetrack. Perhaps you know of people who ministered on your track before 1972, the official year of our founding. There was a local Baptist pastor in Philadelphia named Rae

Cameron who ministered at Philadelphia Park earlier, although Rae recognizes Salty as a person who spearheaded his return to the track when it moved to just outside Philadelphia in the early 1970s.

The Race Track Chaplaincy of America has continued to work to see that all racetracks in the United States (and even abroad in a few instances) have a chaplain. We are equally committed to see that each track has a chaplain who is called and capable. One of Salty's famous sayings was, "Don't send a boy to do a man's work." We have tried to carry out this commitment through the personnel committee which interviews and performs background checks. Additionally, the education and development committee plans a chaplain school each year for two to three days immediately prior to the RTCA annual meeting. For several years now, all chaplains have had to pay only for the travel expense to this event; all other expenses were covered by RTCA. This is RTCA's intention for the future as well.

Daily, Weekly, and Seasonal Tasks

Daily

It is important that the chaplain go out to the people who work on the racetrack. It requires care for the chaplain to do this without getting in the way, but it is an important part of showing the chaplain's love and interest and a great way of learning: learning interpersonal dynamics, names, personalities, things about caring for horses that can be invaluable in carrying on a conversation or making an illustration that speaks poignantly to a racetracker.

On a nearly daily basis in the mornings, but not too early, the chaplain should walk the shed row, spend some time at the gap, go into a few barns every day, and over the course of a week to have been in each barn at least once. The gap is another great place to learn by listening and to meet trainers and owners who would not typically be in the barns. Many chaplains may not have had any experience around horses or around the backstretch of the racetrack. This is where the association and/or the local council can help by having someone walk with the chaplain for a few days. Some of our best chaplains were blessed by having time with the former chaplain at the track that they are starting. They say they might have gotten lost if they were left to do this on their own.

There will be people, probably many people, who will be happy to see you, perhaps especially if you are not a know-it-all. They will be happy to show you what they do when they see that you are interested. You show your interest by being there and patiently walking, looking, and listening. Before you know it, people will call to you, some just saying “hi,” others wanting to talk about the horse they are walking, still others wanting you to pray for the horse that is racing that day, and a host of other things.

Don’t hesitate to pray for their horses. Pray for the horses every time you pray publically and every time you pray privately. They love their horses, and you praying for them means a lot. There is a story of a vet who called on the chaplain to come and pray for a horse for which the vet had done all he could do. The chaplain came and prayed, and the horse got better in an almost miraculous way. Chapel attendance increased miraculously as well.

You may be called on to lead tours of the backstretch for groups. You should invite individuals and groups to tour the track. It is a way to gain support and interest for

the chaplaincy and backstretch community. It is always surprising to see how happy the workers are to see the groups. They are isolated and feel unloved most of the time. It seems like having the groups come for a tour makes them feel someone is interested in what they do. They are happy to talk with and show the visitors the horses and what they do every day. In the same way the backstretch worker will be happy to see the chaplain visiting and leading people to them. Management will even be impressed as you show that you are assisting in marketing!

Once a week or more, walk down to where the horses are being schooled in the starting gate. This is an area that employs many people. It is also another area to see people who are bringing their horse. There is almost always a fairly high level of stress. The owner, trainer, rider, and gate worker all want prayers for the horse to learn this important task without being overcome with fear.

Whenever there is a race day, be sure to spend some time with the jockeys prior to the races. Our most successful chaplains write a half-page devotion with Scripture that is hand out to jockeys, valets, security, and whoever would like one. There is usually a way to make an announcement in the jockeys' locker room area that there will be prayer. Make every effort to pray with most of the jockeys in small groups and individually on a race day. The jockeys are very open at this time and welcoming of prayers from the chaplain.

Good chaplains spend some time in and near the paddock on race days. Race days are times to more easily see and be seen by front side workers. Some workers on the front side may work with the horses in the morning, in which case you learn another side of them. Many other front side workers would never know there was a chaplain around (that

the church was here, as some say) if the chaplain did not at least deliberately wander around the front side public areas and offices. Before you know it, someone from the front side who has no connection with the church will call on you when their loved one dies or is in the hospital, or when they are dealing with some sort of crisis. They may call on you to officiate at their wedding or to participate in other celebrations as well.

Don't forget the cafeteria. Even if you can't afford to eat there, walk through a few times a week. It can be an opportunity to be seen, and people may gain some level of comfort around you. It is also a time when people are perhaps not in as big of a hurry, and they may call to you when they otherwise would not.

Be sure to have a regular day off each week, and do not work too long each day. Make time each day as well for what some call a daily vacation, an hour or more when you do something for yourself, with someone you enjoy that will help you unwind and relax.

Weekly

Have at least a weekly chapel service. Make sure that you have permission to do this, whenever and wherever it is, and announce the service with some signs and public announcements beforehand, and reminders on the day. Be consistent, but be flexible as well.

If you have some who are suggesting a different location, time, or day, be willing to take seriously that advice and try it. It may not mean doing away with something you are already doing; it may be an additional offering.

Have weekly chapels. It may be on a Wednesday evenings. Whatever works best for your racetrack. Have at least weekly meetings for those struggling with addictions that would not attract others. Have at least weekly Bible study type of meeting. At one track it was on Fridays at 11 a.m. and that was often outside, weather permitting. Many have found that having refreshments during or after these meetings aids fellowship and is an attraction. Chapel n' Chows once a week in the evening where as close to a full meal as possible is a tradition with many of our best chaplains.

Local churches can be great sources of assistance with providing food. This is a way to create richer fellowship for the backstretch workers, and it is a way to pique interest from members of local churches. Some of these local church members can become a member of your council, volunteer to help with other needs, drive people to appointments, and a host of other things. It builds a network. You will get a call from someone to whom a member of the church that was there a week ago spoke to about the ministry, and now this new someone wants to get involved!

Seasonal

Make the most of holiday (holy days) times. These are times to share Bible stories in an especially natural way. They are times when backstretch workers feel especially isolated. They are times when the chaplaincy can show itself needful to the most people most easily.

Some have started at a track just a few days before Christmas. They reported walking around the executive offices on Christmas Eve giving out little cups, wrapped in a napkin, tied with a ribbon, and filled with candy that some churches had made up for

the ministry at the track. That was a great way to meet these people and for these people to meet the new chaplain. You should make a point every Christmas and Easter to give out a little something even to the people who have everything. Often it is a devotional booklet, but it is a powerful way to show that you care. These people need the Lord as much as anyone else. As someone has said, they may not be down and out, but then they are up and out. Either way they are still out.

And these are the people from whom we need permission in order to continue our work (we will talk more about that later). This is a time when we want to do more, and some executives want to do more as well and will do it through the work of the chaplaincy at the track if they are aware of what you have planned.

Plan holiday events for holidays throughout the year, and let people know of these plans all throughout the year. As years go by there will be people who ask if you are planning to do this again this year, and they will help make sure it happens. I used to get about 100 percent of my support for these holidays from churches. Now the holiday events have grown in attendance and what is done and given has increased by about 300 to 500 percent. Almost all of the increased giving necessary to give more to more people and be prepared has been from people right on the track volunteering their time, talents, and treasure. That is what we want—for the people in our places of ministry to take ownership and be able to carry on independently.

The Multiple Constituencies on the Racetrack

It is important for the chaplain to know the responsibilities of the many different workers at the racetrack. Certain individuals may hold positions in more than one area,

but there are basically three specific delineations on the track. They are management, racing commission, and horsemen. I have tried to explain it like federal, state, and local officials all working together to get the job done. Another category often forgotten is those who are considered vendors and only vendors (e.g., veterinarians, farriers, trainers, pony riders, and chaplains).

Management is in charge of the physical property. This includes maintenance (e.g., plumbers, carpenters, electricians, grounds keepers), security, risk management, executives, food service, pari-mutuels, cleaning, gate crew, outriders, clerical workers, and others to be sure. Many of these people can collect unemployment when the track is closed if they are not needed.

The racing commission is part of the state government. Their workers are state employees. They have much better benefits, sick days, and vacation. They can collect unemployment when the track is closed. These are the people who issue licenses. There are clerks and executives here. The stewards are state employees. When someone comes to you to complain that they were not paid, send them to the stewards—that is one of the stewards' jobs. The stewards have a lot of power to withhold purses, for instance. They will impose penalties for nonpayment of wages as well, and not many people seem to know this—now you do. You may be tempted to get involved—don't. You can't really help, and you could make an enemy. Remember even Jesus' response in Luke 12:13-14.

The horsemen's association is made up of almost everyone else: owners of horses, trainers, grooms, hot walkers. Many people have a job in the barns in the early mornings or own a horse or two and are involved with the commission or management as well or have a family member who does. The horsemen will have an office with some clerks,

managers, director, and a board of directors. Listening, looking, and walking around will help you sort out the offices and the people who work in one or more of them.

Be sure to send notes and give personal greetings to people. Asking them how a child is doing by name will surprise them and make them know you care like almost nothing else. Buy a ticket to a banquet (if you are not given one for free), and next year you will get one for free. Offer to ask a prayer when you buy the ticket, and next year you will be invited to ask the prayer and even bring a guest.

The Work and Person of the Chaplain

Self-Care and Outreach

The Race Track Chaplaincy of America directs chaplains who were not hired by a local council to begin to establish a group of people who will be partners with the chaplain in the ministry at the local track. You are directed by RTCA to be attending and be involved with a local church. That is the best place to begin asking for prayer and help in your ministry. Attend meetings of the local ministerium and befriend local pastors. Rotary and Kiwanis groups are always looking for new members and speakers. Go to their meetings.

Soon you will not be going to the same church every week, but you will have a church base, where your membership is and that is praying for you and with you. Have a group of people you meet with regularly for prayer and sharing. This may be in a restaurant or home. Both places are good. I find that it is important to regularly have time in an office or home for the privacy allowed there for quality prayer and sharing, not just

friendly talk. The council may become this for the chaplain, but the council should not be the only place for this.

Get involved in the community, and tell your story whenever opportunities arise. The Holy Spirit will be with you and put your ministry on people's hearts. They will begin to share about the ministry as well, and you will receive calls from people you never met who want to tour the track, drop off a donation, or ask how they can help.

Start a Facebook page for your chaplaincy if you do not have one already. Put the address on your business card, and put the address on your office door and/or office building. Connect to other forms of social media to help get out the word of your chaplaincy.

Pray for partners in your work and your track, so that it will become teamwork at your track. This is an important part of self-care and a necessary part of growing the ministry to the people on your track. Many of the people on the track are business people. They have their horse business, and many have additional businesses as well. They can help you file necessary papers with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), state, and local authorities. These papers will be necessary when filing for grants, paying taxes, and allowing donations to be tax deductible. Do not even try to do this alone; get others to help, and continue to allow them to help. Learn to delegate from the beginning and continue to do this so you can do the specialized work of the chaplain that you were called to, trained for, and continue to practice.

No matter how highly trained you are, see that you do continue your education. The racetrack is a new place for most of the highly trained chaplains, and there is surely

the need for reviewing and deepening learning in areas that hadn't been required before or used for a long time.

No matter how little formal training you have had for the chaplaincy, see that you do not scorn scholarship. You may have a great understanding of the power and appreciation of the guidance of the Holy Spirit; see that you always do your part to be "approved unto God."

The racetrack chaplain is called to minister to everyone on the racetrack. There are some who cannot read or write, there are others who have reached the highest levels of learning, and there are many in between. Your continuing to study will increase your ability to minister to every one of them.

Accountability and Record Keeping

Keeping a calendar and record of your activities hour by hour is an invaluable record for many reasons. Do this on at least a daily basis or you will forget, and review it for things that you may have forgotten to include. Your calendar and notes even have legal evidentiary validity. Looking back on your calendar can give you a much needed sense of accomplishment in this work that is never ending. Look back on your calendar in those times when you feel that you are not doing enough or accomplishing enough, and it will give you a measure of comfort that you have done a lot!

Your calendar will help you report on your activities. Be sure to report what you have done to your council and to those from whom you receive funding. Do not wait to be asked for a report. Make your reporting a proactive part of your fundraising and friend-raising.

No one but you knows all that you do, so you have to report on this, and it will be a powerful form of promotion. Reporting regularly on your activities helps others know all that the chaplain is doing for them. This will help to keep and increase your funding. When you apply for new funding from an entirely new source, you will have this written and ready to use with some adjustments to what the area of interests are for each given source.

Helpful Forms

Always get and keep receipts. There have been times when a chaplain and/or chaplaincy council has purchased things and someone wanted to be a part of this by offering to reimburse the chaplaincy for all or part of the purchased item(s). Having those receipts was helpful in those times, and they are helpful for many other reasons.

The following forms are for you and councils to use freely and adapt for their use. They are forms that other councils use and find useful and necessary. Make sure to use them or something similar.

Transfer Request Form

This form will be used at least for transfers to a petty cash account from a main account. Some councils will have several accounts. Whatever the case may be, this will be a form that will prove that the action was not done without a record and without proper approval by required parties. You may choose to make some adjustments to the form provided below but the format is one that has been used and approved to meet generally accepted accounting principles.

FUND TRANSFER REQUEST

To: Name, Title/Position, RTCA of _____, Inc.

Date: _____

Transfer to: _____ Amount: _____

Address: _____

Purpose: _____

Submitted by: _____

Transfer number: _____ Date issued: _____

In/Out Voucher

This is a form that is useful for seeing that as much of your activities as possible can be shown on your financial budgets. For example, there have been times when gift cards were given to chaplains. The card was used for buying Christmas gifts. The receipts from the purchase of those gifts was kept and sent to the treasurer as an attachment to the In/Out Voucher. Typically in the “Purpose” section of the form below will be a note, “see attached receipts.” The purchases could then be properly accounted for and credited to the benevolences portion of that budget.

There are many other examples of uses for this form. The general purpose is to allow for as much as possible to be represented in your financial reports, again allowing you to show just how much you are doing.

IN/OUT VOUCHER

Date: _____

Amount: _____

Purpose: _____

Monies from: _____

Signed: _____

Check Request

No one wants to write a check without a documented reason. This form helps meet that need. It could be a check request for reimbursement to the chaplain for something that a chaplaincy credit card could not be used for.

If your chaplaincy has a scholarship program, this form may be used to request a scholarship check. In that case there would be attached a signed approval of the scholarship application along with the application papers.

There should always be a bill, receipt, or some documentation attached to the check request. There may be some exceptional circumstances, but there should be a limit on the amount or a discussion in committee or board meeting minutes. Those documents or pertinent portion of the document can be attached.

CHECK REQUEST

To: Name, Title/Position, RTCA of _____, Inc.

Date: _____

Payable to: _____ Amount: _____

Address: _____

Purpose: _____

Submitted by: _____

Check number: _____ Date issued: _____

APPENDIX B

RACETRACK CHAPLAINCY SURVEY

Organizational and Assessment Goals

As the Education and Development Committee of the Race Track Chaplaincy of America set out to write a handbook for racetrack chaplaincies and chaplains we were beset with questions and a desire to give relevant answers to questions and concerns that chaplains and chaplaincies have (not just questions of our own). Some of these questions were unknown to the chaplains and the chaplaincies as they were unknown to the committee. This instrument helped create an atmosphere of interest and exploration into what the individual and corporate goals should be for our future. Visits were conducted to several racetracks and conversations with the chaplain(s) at those tracks each time. Chaplains were also spoken to individually and in some group settings at several of our annual meetings.

While this assessment does not have any purely objective questions and it was thus harder to compile the data, I believe it allowed the chaplain to articulate more clearly and personally the answers to these questions. Allowing the chaplains to write their answers may have produced greater participation and evoked a greater sense of the interest in them that truly was the motivation for the research. There are only about forty-five chaplains in this organization so we believed that working with the subjective instrument was manageable. We had assessments returned by twenty-one chaplains.

It is our goal to develop an interest and a culture of quality improvement and individual development as the Race Track Chaplaincy of America soon celebrates its

fiftieth anniversary. We want to continue to ask what the needs of the tracks that we serve are, and we want to better ask our chaplains what their needs are. In order for us to grow our chaplain corps and keep the chaplains who have applied and been selected we need to serve them and their interests and needs.

The assessment instrument and the interviews together helped us to develop a handbook that will guide the chaplains in planning their days and their years. It will also be a handbook for chaplaincy boards to make sure that they are meeting the needs of the chaplain(s), helping them in their professional development, and assisting them in the work of the ministry. The handbook will answer the question how chaplains and chaplaincies can best minister to the physical, social, and spiritual needs of the whole racetrack community.

Assessment Results

Every chaplain was seen face to face. It was in a variety of venues, but always face to face. All that were visited happily accepted the survey, filled it out, and returned it, with only one exception. The president refused even to look at the survey when seen at the next CSAM.

Interestingly, the number of returned surveys far exceeded any type of questionnaires that Race Track Chaplaincy of America had ever sent by mail or email in the past. The personal presentation of the survey, which would never have been done without a compromise required by the president, perhaps is the very reason for the record response.

We received surveys from about 50 percent of all our chaplains. The survey showed a strong commitment on the part of our chaplains. Fifty percent have second jobs. The average chaplain spends 73 percent of his time in the work of a chaplain but receives only 58 percent of his income from his work as a chaplain. The benefits that the average chaplain receives are almost zero.

The education level of those I was able to survey in 2016 and 2017 is higher than I expected based on conversations that took place over the past eight years. In fact, I have to declare that I think this sample gave results with higher education levels than if I had been able to survey 100 percent of our chaplains. That being said, I still think that the education levels of the group surveyed are not satisfactory, and even more concerning is the number of chaplains who listed no or very few educational future goals.

Of the chaplains who responded, 44 four percent had a bachelor's degree. Fewer than half of these did not have a bachelor's degree that in some way related to the work of a chaplain. Those who did have a relevant bachelor's degree had a master of divinity degree as well (22 percent). Among the respondents, 44 percent did not have any college degree; 22 percent reported having some college courses, and this group's classes were somewhat related to the work of the chaplain.

Of the respondents, 56 percent said they had no educational goals, and more than half of these were those who did not yet have a degree. Of those who did not have a degree, 33 percent expressed interest in further education that was directly related to the work of the chaplain. Also, 11 percent of the respondents expressed a desire to learn Spanish, which is helpful in relating to a large percentage of the population of most of the racetracks in North America (approximately 25 percent of our chaplains speak fluent or

near-fluent Spanish). My greater concern than the lack of education is the lack of commitment to professional development and a sense of the need and value of higher education.

Below is a copy of the assessment that was distributed to the chaplains. The form of the assessment that they received provided more space for their responses.

ASSESSMENT FOR THE INTERESTS AND NEEDS OF THE CHAPLAINS OF RTCA

Name / Age (optional): _____

Track(s) (optional): _____

How long have you served as a racetrack chaplain: _____

How many tracks have you been a chaplain: _____

How many tracks are you currently serving: _____

How do you divide your time between tracks: _____

How much staff support do you have paid/voluntary, what do they do: _____

What interaction do you have with peers/how much: _____

How much of your time is spent as a racetrack chaplain: _____

What percentage of your income is from racetrack chaplain work: _____

What other job(s) do you have: _____

How long have you had the other job(s): _____

Why do you have the other
job(s):_____

How much more as a percentage and/or dollar amount would be required for you to be
able to be a full-time chaplain:_____

What benefits do you receive:_____

What additional benefits do you need/want:_____

What diplomas/degrees do you have:_____

What courses have you taken without having received a
diploma:_____

What educational goals/areas of interest/needs do you
have:_____

What/How much do you need to meet those goals (money, time, etc.):_____

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Wilmington College, Wilmington, DE, *Master of Education*

Graduate Hospital, Philadelphia, PA, *Clinical Pastoral Education*

Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, PA, *Master of Divinity*

Southern Connecticut University, New Haven, CT, *Bachelor of Science, Political Science and Philosophy*

WORK EXPERIENCE

Race Track Chaplaincy of America, Bensalem, PA, *Senior Chaplain*, November 2009–present

Boards: LaSalle University, Philadelphia, PA, *Board Member*, January 2011–present; Baptist Homes and Hospitals, *Board Member and Treasurer*, 1991–1999

Churches: Taylor Memorial Baptist Church, Paulsboro, NJ, *Pastor*, May 2001–March 2010; American Baptist Churches of New Jersey, *Intentional Interim Pastor*, 1997–2001; Fairview Community Baptist Church, Camden, NJ, *Pastor*, 1989–1997; Upland Baptist Church, Chester, PA, *Associate Pastor*, 1987–1989; Upland Baptist Church, Chester, PA, *Associate Pastor*, 1987–1989

Education: Park Bible Academy, Pennsville, NJ, *Headmaster and Teacher*, July 2001–August 2009; American Baptist Churches Leadership Academy, *Instructor*, 1991–1995

Health Care and Hospitals: Cranbury Center, Cranbury, NJ, *Executive Director and Administrator*, July 2000–July 2001; Underwood Memorial Hospital, Woodbury, NJ, *Director, Transitional Care*, September 1998–July 2000; Parkview Healthcare Center, Carneys Point, NJ, *Administrator*, May 1998–December 1998; Riverview Estates/Baptist Home of South Jersey, Riverton, NJ, *Chaplain*, 1995–1998

Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, *Director of Security*, 1986–1989

United States Army, *Captain*, 1981–1989